

Dorris
and
Her Mountain Home



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To her valued friend

**MRS. BELLE
CALDWELL
CULBERTSON**

president of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbytery of Washington City and former missionary to Indo-China, this story of life in Italy and Switzerland is affectionately dedicated by **THE
TRANSLATOR**

Washington, D. C.

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Dorris and Her Mountain Home.

Translated from the German of J. Spyri.

BY MARY E. IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

A CHANCE MEETING.

One beautiful evening in the latter part of May, a little girl stood leaning upon a low stone wall on the slope of Mont Rosso, which overlooks the blue waters of Lake Maggoire in Italy.

She was listening to the melody of chiming bells, borne upon the soft air from steeples in villages far and near.

A basket of roses was at her feet, their odor mingling with that of violets and other wild flowers blooming in luxurious profusion about her.

She was so absorbed by the sweet sounds that she did not notice a young girl who was walking in the footpath leading from the lake, and was somewhat startled when a white hand was laid gently upon her shoulder.

“I did not wish to alarm you, little girl,” smiled

the stranger, and Dorris noticed the low, sweet tone of voice; "I should have spoken before touching you; I would like to sit upon this old gray wall and chat with you; will you tell me your name?"

"Yes, it is Dorris Maurizius."

"A real pretty name; mine is Amälie von Ernstein; I am glad to meet you in this lovely spot; do you often come here?"

"Oh, yes, very often; I pass it every time I go to Maja's of an errand, and always stop to look over the wall, and when it is at this time in the evening I love to listen to the bells."

Amälie glanced with admiring eyes upon the sturdy little figure with large, soft brown eyes and cheeks like damask roses; and Dorris was equally pleased with the tall, slender figure of her companion, the deep blue eyes and the wealth of blonde hair, and above all the sweet, cordial manner.

"Did these lovely roses grow in your garden?" asked Amälie, glancing down at them.

"Yes, we have plenty of roses, but you may speak in German to me, I understand it," her quick intelligence having discerned the German accent, although her new friend spoke the Italian well for a foreigner.

"Do you really understand my native tongue? Yet you are an Italian; your beautiful dark eyes and hair and olive complexion tell me that."

"But they told you wrong," laughed Dorris glee-

fully; "my father and mother were born in Germany; so I am a German, although I was born in Italy."

"What part of Germany were they from?" asked Amälie, with interest.

"Papa was from the shore of the North Sea; his home was in a pretty village there."

"And you mother was from the same place?"

"No; mamma was from a village in Switzerland, called Schuls; they came here because papa was not strong, and the German doctors said the Italian climate and the mountain air would suit him better."

"I hope it did help him."

"The doctors said it helped him to live longer, but he died last summer," and the dark eyes filled with tears. "He was an artist, and oh, he painted the loveliest picture of his home on the shore of the North Sea, with the white waves dashing upon the strand."

"Where is the picture now, Dorris?"

"Papa sold it to a picture dealer in Pallanza, and said he could paint another at any time, but he had so much ordered work that he put it off from time to time, and it was never done. When he took ill he wanted to go to his old home, but was not strong enough. Then he wished for the picture to be by his bed where he could see it. Mamma asked Maja to go to Pallanza and buy it back, and all the

time Maja was gone she was so anxious because she thought the picture dealer might have sold it."

"Was it sold?" asked Amälie, eagerly.

"No, but the picture dealer said that a lady who was visiting in Pallanza had admired it very much and had partly promised to buy it; but when Maja told him how ill papa was he said he would lend it; and Maja brought it home with her, and papa and mamma were so glad to have it."

"Where is it now?"

"Mamma longed to keep it, but would not; she sent it back and thanked the picture dealer with many thanks for his kindness."

"My dear Dorris, it was I who bought that picture, but I never until now knew the history of it. You and your mother are welcome to it, if you can send for it."

"Oh, yes we can," said Dorris, clasping her hands for joy; "Maja will be glad to fetch it, and mamma will be glad."

"Who is Maja?"

"She is our old neighbor who lives in a cottage under the shade of the chestnut trees."

"Does she live by herself?"

"Oh, no; she has Giacomo and Benedetto and Marietta living with her now."

"Who are they?"

"They are her daughter Marie's children. Marie

was her only child, and when she died Maja took them all, and is taking care of them."

"Is their father living?"

"Oh, yes; but he works many miles away. He is a marble cutter. He comes to see them all as often as he can. Mamma says that he was always good to Marie and the children, and did the best he could for them."

"It is so lovely here," commented Amälie, looking reflectively over the landscape spread before them, "but one must look for trials here as well as in less favored spots."

"Do you live on Mont Rosso?" asked Dorris.

"No, my father and I live in Berlin, but it is so lovely here in the springtime of the year that we came to Pallanza to stay for awhile. Do you ever come there?"

"No, I have never been there. I staid with papa most of the day and we took lovely walks, but I never went so far. Of mornings he painted in the chapel, and of afternoons under the shade of the chestnut trees. Then when he was tired of painting we went higher up the mountain where we could look upon the sea and other mountains. Then of evenings papa and mamma read aloud and I listened."

"When your papa painted what did you do? Could you help him in any way?"

“I could not help much, but I read to him and he taught me to sing.”

“I wish you would sing for me.”

Without making excuse or waiting for a second request, Dorris trilled out in a sweet, clear voice :

“Red clouds in the heavens,
White foam upon the sea,
And beautiful, oh beautiful,
Is the whole world to me.

“Red berries on the hill side,
Blue violets on the lea,
And beautiful, oh beautiful,
Is the whole world to me.

“But soon the autumn cometh,
The leaves drop from the tree,
But beautiful, still beautiful,
Is the whole world to me.

“After autumn comes the winter,
Then spring comes back in glee,
And beautiful, oh beautiful,
Is the whole world to me.”

“That is a song I love,” commented Fräulein von Ernstein when she finished, “and your father has taught you to sing correctly ; you have a good voice and will give pleasure to many with your sweet songs.”

“Mamma has a sweet voice ; papa loved to hear her sing.”

"I could not think what to give you in remembrance of our first meeting," said Amälie, "but now that you sing so sweetly I will give you my little hymn book and will write your name in it," and taking the book and a pencil from her pocket she wrote, "Dorris Maurizius, from Amälie von Ernstein," and adding the date she put the book in the hand of Dorris, who colored with pleasure at the gift.

"Now I will ask you to read one of my favorite hymns," she continued, and selecting one she passed the book to Dorris, who read it without hesitation:

"Take my hand, oh Father dear,
Let me know thee ever near;
Lead me, I will follow thee,
Though it night and darkness be.
Yes, dear Saviour, take my hand,
Lead me to the blessed land."

"You read well, Dorris, and I am sure you understand what you read. You know if we trust our dear Father to lead us, he will take us in the way that is best for us."

"My father did, I know," said Dorris, confidently.

"But see, Dorris," said her companion, pointing to the last two lines, "we must consider these words as well as those of the first line."

"But that is what my father tried to do; he

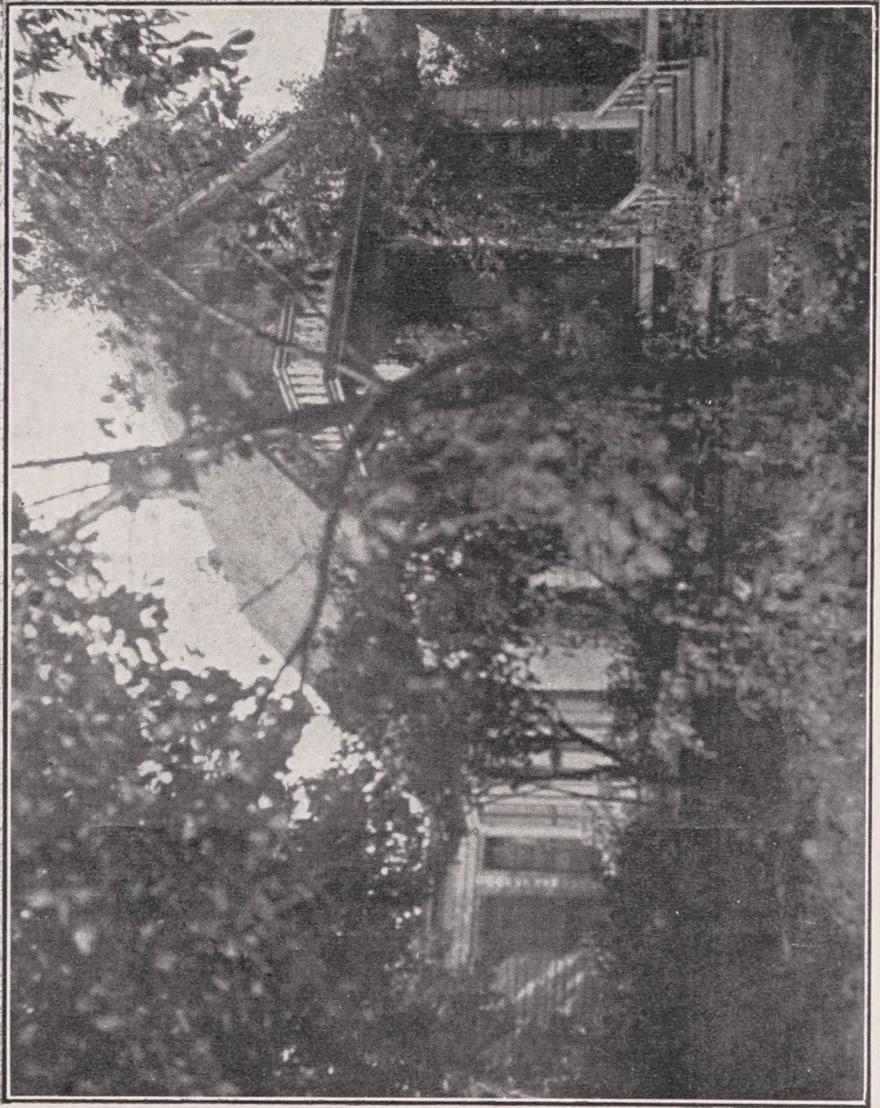
wanted me to be perfectly happy here and in heaven."

"I am sure he did; sure of it. I too have a dear, kind father who loves me so much that he would do anything in the world that is possible for him to do that I might have health. But I am ill, and this is such a grief to him that I cannot tell my feelings to him and thus make him willing to give me up. With all his deep, tender love for me, and all his great longing to have me well, he is powerless to help me. Therefore it is a blissful thought to me that there is a Father in heaven who loves me better than can any earthly father, and more than that, has the will and the power to make me well."

"Will he cure you?" asked Dorris, earnestly.

"He will, but perhaps not until he has led me into a higher and better life. In the new life I will never die. This earth is beautiful," she said, glancing at the rosy clouds in the west and at the lake where tall trees were reflected in its clear waters, "but there is a land far more beautiful. When called I must go, and my Saviour will know the best way to lead me; I will put my hand in his with all faith and trust."

Dorris had listened with rapt attention to these words; they were kept in memory, though far from knowing that at some time in the future they would be told to a listener who would treasure them as the greatest earthly blessing.



The Home of Dorris.

She was pondering over them when a gentleman was seen coming toward them—a tall, handsome man, with hair tinged with gray.

“This is a new friend, papa,” said Amälie, cheerily; “Dorris Maurizius; and Dorris this is my dear father; I want you to be good friends.”

“I am sure we will be,” he said pleasantly, as he took the hand of the little girl; “my daughter’s friends are mine.”

“She has entertained me so well that I almost forgot that you might be waiting for me by the lake. I hope you have not been anxious about me?”

“A little,” and he tenderly put back a stray ringlet from the fair forehead, “but am glad you had such pleasant company.”

“I will often think of you, Dorris, and hope you will think of me,” said Amälie as she stepped down from her place; “will you tell me where you live?”

“Yes, and it is but a little walk from here; you just take that path until you come to a cottage by a great tree covered by grape vines. Near the tree is a great rock, and back of the cottage is our terrace with beautiful flowers, and from it we can look out over the sea and the islands.”

“That is beautiful, and I hope to see it some time, and will look for you to visit me in Pallanza; we are stopping at the hotel there. Good-bye, Dorris, and thank you for this pleasant hour.”

“I have more than enough roses for Maja and the

children," said Dorris, taking up her basket; "will you have three of them?" and she selected three of the handsomest and presented them.

"Oh, thank you; I am glad to have them," and kissing the little girl she took her father's arm and went down the path to the lake.

Dorris watched until they were out of sight, then went on up the mountain path to the cottage of Maja.

CHAPTER II.

A VISIT TO PALLANZA.

It was a great and unexpected pleasure to Dorothy Maurizius to know that she was to have the painting that had been a comfort to her husband, and was deeply grateful to the kind girl who was willing to do them such a favor.

“Dorris,” she said the next morning after they had finished their frugal breakfast upon the terrace, “would you like to go with Maja to Pallanza this afternoon and get the picture?”

“Oh, mamma,” cried Dorris, her eyes beaming with delight, “can I really go?”

“I think the walk will not be too much for you; you need not hurry, and can sit and rest on the way. As soon as we have had luncheon you can go up and ask Maja if she can go, and if so come back with her and dress for the call upon Fräulein von Ernstein.”

Dorris enjoyed a happy morning in anticipation, and made preparation for it speedily. Her pretty pink muslin dress and sash were laid out in readiness, and in a few minutes after she and Maja came down the mountain they could be on the way to Pallanza.

Then she sat with her mother on the terrace sewing and listening, as she loved to, while her mother told of her own early days in the Swiss hamlet, where her grandparents and uncles still lived.

As soon as luncheon was finished she hurried up the mountain path, and soon reached the cottage of their humble neighbor. It was small and dark with age, and so covered with grape vines that it looked a leafy bower, very cool and pleasant. A wide arbor lined with benches led to it, also covered by grape vines, a favorite place with Dorris, for there she and Maja had often taken supper together, and Maja had told her true stories of her own youthful days. Dorothy had been a kind friend to her, and she in turn was faithful in any service she could render, and was honored and esteemed for her genuine piety.

“Certainly I will go to Pallanza,” she said when Dorris told her errand, “and will stop to see your mother with you, and can tell her that it suits me well to go, for Giacomo can see that the other two children will keep out of danger and mischief. I have done my morning’s work, and can go right away.”

Dorris watched her making preparations for the visit, for Maja was extremely particular about her appearance. She donned a beautifully laundered print dress, and over it a wide apron in the same

spotless condition; then tying a silk kerchief over her gray hair, pronounced herself ready.

Dorris took her hand, and they went cheerily down the mountain, and found Fräü Dorothy watching at the door for them. In her hand was a basket of rare roses, which she had just finished arranging as a gift to Fräulein von Ernstein.

“Oh, Maja, I am so glad it suits you to go,” she said; “come in and rest while Dorris dresses.”

Maja dropped into a chair by the door, and the time required by Dorris for dressing was all too short in which to recount the antics of Benedetto and Marietta in the cottage, which had heretofore been so quiet.

Dorris soon appeared, sweet as a wild rose in her simple costume, and they set out, feeling that they were enjoying a fine outing.

“Maja, this is the vineyard where I have seen you and Marie cutting great bunches of purple grapes,” said Dorris; “won’t you be glad when the time comes again for you to work and earn money?”

“Yes, but when will the time come for me, with three children to care for; no one knows but me what watchings they take,” and she told how her time and patience were taxed, yet with it all showed her love for her daughter’s children.

When they reached Pallanza, Dorris was interested in all she saw, particularly the fruit-sellers—

women with large baskets filled with luscious fruits; but they did not halt, but went directly to the hotel and mounted the broad steps. Maja remained in the veranda, while Dorris, basket in hand, stepped into the wide corridor with many doors, and a clerk at a desk asked whom she wished to see.

“A lady who bought a painting from an art dealer and will give it to me,” replied Dorris, so bewildered by the strangeness of the place that she forgot to give the lady’s name.

But she was spared embarrassment, for at that moment a gentleman came down the stairway whom she recognized as Amälie’s father, and she ran and clasped his hand.

“Why, bless me, this is our little friend from Cavandone,” he said kindly; “have you come to visit my Amälie?”

“Yes; she was so good as to tell me that mamma could have the picture of the North Sea that papa painted, and Maja came with me to carry it home.”

“Yes, she told me of it, and the picture is ready. We are very glad that we can oblige you. Come right up to Amälie’s room; she will be greatly pleased to see you,” and he took the hand of Dorris and led her away, the clerk looking surprised that the flower girl had such distinguished acquaintances.

Fräulein Amälie was reclining upon a sofa near

an open window in a prettily furnished apartment, and her beautiful eyes beamed with pleasure at sight of Dorris.

“Come, bring a chair close by me,” she said cordially; “I do so love to look at your happy face. And you brought more roses for me? See, I have the three you gave me yesterday,” and she attracted the attention of Dorris to them, as fresh as ever in a handsome vase upon the center table. “I have been cheered ever since in thinking over our chat by the stone wall; and papa was so glad that we have the painting for you; he tied it in strong paper ready for you; he has gone to his room for it.”

“Oh, thank you; mamma is so glad to know we are to have it, and sent her most grateful thanks to you.”

“I too am glad we can do you both this favor; my time on earth will be too short to do many kindnesses.”

“Won’t you let the doctor come to see you?” asked Dorris.

“Oh, yes; he comes every day; but only the great Physician can cure me; I trust in him. Yes, there I shall be well and happy, and shall see my dear mother,” and she glanced upward with a serene smile. “If I could only tell papa of my joy in going home, and tell him that my only sorrow is in leaving him unreconciled to parting from me; but

it distresses him so that I cannot mention it to him."

At that moment her father came in with the picture, and Dorris arose to go.

"Come when you can stay longer, dear Dorris," said Amälie; "I would so love to have you come."

Dorris thanked her heartily for the invitation and her kindness in giving the picture, and kissed her in farewell.

"I will take the picture down to Maja," said Herr von Ernstein, and, leading the way, Dorris followed.

"Do you think my daughter looks as well as she did yesterday?" he asked when they reached the veranda, where Maja was waiting patiently.

"Yes, I think she looks better; her lips are redder and she has such pretty color in her cheeks," replied the little girl.

"Thank you, dear, and God bless you; your visit has done her good; come very soon again," and with a happy smile upon his face he led Dorris down the steps of the veranda and saw her and Maja on their way home, then returned to their parlor to read to Amälie.

"You have brought the picture, Maja?" said Dorothy when the two friends reached the cottage. "I can never forget Fräulein Amälie's and your goodness in doing us such a kindness. Here is a basket with cakes and other things for your supper,

that you need not prepare any, but can rest after your long walk; and here is a little gift in memory of my dear husband," and she put a number of silver pieces into the toil-hardened hand, which was received with gratitude, and then Maja hurried home.

It had been a long walk for Dorris, but she had enjoyed every moment of it, and also enjoyed the good little supper the mother had prepared for her, and which they shared under the shade of the arbor on the terrace. Then, in response to her mother's request, she went to her room and slept for more than an hour.

Dorothy, in the mean time, sat and reflected, as she had done many times, over the words of her husband, especially those which related to Dorris.

"We will train our daughter carefully and prayerfully, dear Dorothy," he had said the morning of the day that he was called to come up higher; "train her that she may keep the pure heart and trusting faith that God has given her. Christian influence must surround her always; she must see or hear nothing but what is good. She must take her first communion in the church in my old home on the shore of the North Sea, the dear church of which my loved father was pastor for so many years. If not there, then in the church at Schuls."

Fräü Maurizius was still meditating over these things when Dorris, refreshed by sleep, appeared,

full of a new idea which must be imparted to her mother.

“Mamma,” she said, “papa taught me to read and write and cast up accounts, and when Maja told me as we walked along of the mischief the children get into, and the noise they make when in the house, and the fears she has when they are out that they will fall from trees or rocks, I thought of a plan to help her.”

“What is the plan, dear?” asked Dorothy, deeply interested.

“I could teach what I know to Giacomo and Benedetto, which would be of use to them, and by keeping them quiet be a help to Maja. Don’t you think papa would be pleased with my plan if he were here?”

“I am sure he would; the greatest happiness of his life was to help others. It will be a good thing for you all; it will teach you patience and self-control, and will give the poor children the only chance they have to learn.”

“Can I go to-morrow morning, mamma?”

“Yes, the sooner you can help Maja the better.”

“I will get everything ready this evening,” said Dorris eagerly; “my primer, spelling book, slate, pencils, paper, pens, and ink. Oh, how glad I am that papa taught me so well; I can be of use to somebody.”

Then mother and daughter took up their needle-

work, Dorothy taking interest and pleasure in teaching Dorris the art of sewing as well as the details of housekeeping.

But there was no teaching for nearly a week, for the next morning a heavy rain-storm set in, which lasted several days, and Dorris could not visit the home of Maja.

But at length the storm was over, and although the clouds were lowering, Dorothy thought there would be no more rain, and Dorris hurried away.

She found the cottage in confusion, Benedetto having pulled a burning stick from the fire on the hearth, which not only set his apron ablaze and burned his fingers, but dropped ashes into the soup boiling on the coals. At the same moment Marietta had pulled a bucket of water from the shelf, which wet her from head to foot, and she was screaming from fright and discomfort, and Maja was scolding them all and slapping right and left.

“It is too much! too much! I am almost beside myself since the wet weather set in,” she said, as she gave Dorris a chair. Then she stripped the wet clothes from Marietta, and wrapping a shawl about her sat her by the fire while she wrapped Benedetto’s fingers in flour to prevent them from blistering.

“Is there any new trouble, Maja?” asked Dorris.

“There is no need of a new one, child; the old one is enough. The children could not get out all

week, and they are such a charge, and their noise almost sets me wild."

"But the children could help you, Maja, if you would tell them what to do."

"They could if they would, but Giacomo sees nothing and hears nothing, and gives no more heed to the bothers I have than a marble statue."

"I have come to help you with the children, Maja; I will stay all morning and teach them as papa taught me."

"Bless you, child, that will be a great help. My work is all back and I cannot catch up with it for watching to keep the children out of mischief."

"May we have the table by this window, Maja? Mamma said it is too damp this morning for us to have our school in the grape arbor."

"Certainly, child, you shall have the table any place you want it."

Dorris helped her place it by the one window; then Maja dressed Marietta and went to the spring to do the washing, which had accumulated rapidly since the children came, feeling a blessed relief that they were, for one morning at least, off her mind.

Dorris placed all the articles she had brought upon the table, and then told the children to take their places, but there was no response.

Giacomo, a handsome boy of eight, stood in a corner of the room, his black eyes fixed upon the

teacher in silence, remaining immovable through all her beckoning and coaxing. Benedetto ran from one side of the room to the other, jumping over a piece of wood he had placed in the middle of the floor, and Marietta was jumping from the door-sill to the ground.

"Come, Giacomo, and I will tell you a pretty story about a wolf and five kids," she said, but the boy turned his face to the wall.

"Tell it to me," said Benedetto, stopping in his play.

"I will; come Marietta and listen," and the little girl came and stood by her, looking up into her face.

Fortunately, Dorris had come prepared for such an emergency, for among the school-books was one with gay pictures, and after telling the story of the wolf and the kids she tried lessons, to which neither Giacomo or the others paid any attention, so she spent the whole morning reading stories and explaining the pictures.

It was now time for Dorris to go home, and she put the school things in the satchel, while Giacomo watched her in silence.

"Giacomo," she said, going to him, "why wouldn't you come and look at the pictures and listen to the story of the wolf and the kids?"

"Mother told me that story," he replied, with trembling voice.

"Then you should love to listen to it and be friendly with me."

"Mother will never come again," he said, bursting into tears and turning his face to the wall.

"Oh, dear Giacomo," said Dorris, putting her arm around him, "forgive me for not thinking you were grieving for your mother. My father will never come again, and I miss him just as you do your dear mother," and they wept in sympathy while the other children looked on in solemn silence.

Giacomo had found a friend who understood him. He had not seen his father since his mother was carried to her place of rest, and his grandmother was too overburdened with her own sorrows to talk to the boy and help him bear his loss. The cottage was empty of comfort and consolation, but until then he had shed no tears. Dorris had put her arm around him as his mother had done; henceforth he was her faithful friend, and years after evinced his gratitude in a delightful and unexpected manner.

"Oh, Dorris," said Maja, coming in at that moment with a great bundle of wood she had gathered in the forest, "I feel like another person since you gave me a chance to see two steps ahead of me. I do thank you."

"I will come to-morrow, and the children will do

even better than they did to-day. I will bring another picture book."

The next morning at the same hour Dorris went up the mountain and met Giacomo, who had come to watch for her and carry her box. Benedetto and Marietta welcomed her with delight, and clamored to see the picture book, but Dorris was firm in her refusal. They must learn the lessons she gave them, or they would see no pictures. They took seats at the table, and Dorris gave the boys paper, pens, and ink and Marietta slate and pencil, and soon all were interested in copying what she wrote, the look of despondency leaving Giacomo as he became interested in his work. Then while the boys were learning the simple spelling lesson she gave them, she taught Marietta her letters; this was varied with counting, and when it came time for the pictures and stories the children felt they had earned them.

"Oh, you good angel!" exclaimed Maja when Dorris was ready to go, "I have begun to love the children more, now that I have not the care of them all day, and feel so rested that their noise does not trouble me as it did."

When Dorris told her mother of her success, she noticed that she was more interested than at any time since her great bereavement, except in the case of the return of the painting, and a new thought came to her.

“Mamma,” she said, “let me bring the children here to-morrow instead of teaching them there. We could make the terrace our school-room, and you could sit there and listen. Won’t you let them come, mamma?”

“Yes, you may have them here, Dorris; your father would be glad to have us help them.”

It was a charming change for all from the dim little room to the fragrant terrace. Dorothy welcomed them cordially, and took upon herself the instruction of Marietta. She was a cultured musician, and music was added to the daily exercises, to the delight of the children, who had good voices, and Giacomo and Benedetto learned the notes quickly.

“Grandmother is going to Pallanza this afternoon, and said if your mother is willing you could go with her to see Fräulein von Ernstein,” was the charming message that Giacomo brought one morning when the children came to their lessons.

“Certainly she can go, and I am glad she has the opportunity,” responded Dorothy, to the great delight of Dorris, and after luncheon the two set out upon the beautiful walk, but when they reached the hotel Dorris found a new clerk at the desk.

“There are no guests here of that name,” he replied to her inquiry; “if they were ever here they are gone.”

This was a disappointment, but Dorris went

with Maja upon her errand, and upon the whole had an enjoyable visit to Pallanza with her old and faithful friend.

Time passed on, and every week day the children spent the whole morning with Dorothy and Dorris, growing cultured, lovable, and helpful in that sweet, Christian home.

CHAPTER III.

GIVING UP THE OLD HOME.

Thus passed the weeks into months and the months into years, and Dorris continued to teach the children, and under the training of her excellent mother was growing into useful and beautiful womanhood.

Her sixteenth birthday came, and on the morning of the day she arose early and gazed from her window at the roses upon the terrace glowing in the early beams of the sun. All was so fresh, fragrant, and beautiful that her heart went up in gratitude to God for the blessings she enjoyed.

She stood there for some time, then went out upon the terrace to get a nearer view of the flowers, and was surprised and pleased to see Maja and the three children coming toward her, all in their Sabbath attire and carrying wreaths of wild flowers. In addition to a wreath Maja carried a basket of fine grapes as a present to Dorris on her birthday.

Giacomo stepped forward, and, presenting his wreath, his handsome eyes brilliant with health and contentment, said: "I thank you for all you have done for us; may you live long and be always happy."

It was now Benedetto's turn, and being embarrassed by his position as orator, his voice was pitched beyond its ordinary compass, and his face very red indeed. "To-day is your great festival, because you are sixteen. You are not a little girl any more, but a pretty young lady; I hope you will always be as pretty as you are now."

"You didn't say it right," whispered Marietta; but Benedetto had no intention of making another trial. He gave his wreath and gave place to his critic.

But Marietta found it easier to criticise than to make an address. She forgot the little poem with which she was to congratulate Dorris, and could only give her wreath and step aside in confusion.

"Dear Dorris," said Maja, coming forward, "for sixteen years you have been a joy and a blessing to all near you. These grapes are from the sunny field where you and I have often walked at sunset. You admired these rich clusters, and I have watched them and kept them for this day. We have had happy days together, and now on your sixteenth birthday I can only say, 'May our Father in heaven bless thee, and prosper thee, and keep thee in his peace.'"

The happiness of Dorris was increased to find that her mother was expecting the little company and they were to take breakfast upon the terrace. Many little delicacies had been prepared unknown

to Dorris, and throughout, her birthday celebration was a joyous surprise.

Maja was in excellent spirits, for she had heard from Beppo, now in Genoa, and he had sent her money to buy clothing for the children, and was coming as soon as possible to see them. And Dorris—how could Maja ever be grateful enough to her? She had made of Giacomo a boy of whom any one might be proud, for all his thoughts were now for others, giving a helping hand wherever needed. Benedetto had become a refined, courteous boy like his elder brother. “What would Dorris think to hear you speak so?” or “What would Dorris think to see you act so?” was all that was necessary from Maja or Giacomo to quell his boisterous or mutinous outbreaks. He had grown neat in person and well informed upon general subjects, as well as in knowledge gained from books, for what Dorris had learned from her father and mother she imparted to them, and having bright intellects and retentive memories, it was seed sown in good ground.

In addition to lessons from books and orally, music, and by example, Fräü Dorothy took great pleasure in instructing Marietta in needlework and knitting, and the deft fingers of the little girl did credit to her teacher.

Maja was intelligent enough to appreciate the benefit such friends were to the motherless chil-

dren, training them in the path of right, and sharing freely the advantages which they had enjoyed, owing to a more favored position in life.

“May God’s blessing rest upon Fräu Maurizius and Dorris,” was always included in the nightly prayer of Maja and the children, uttered with sincere hearts and in firm belief that the prayer would be granted.

Nor were Fräu Maurizius and her daughter without present reward for their labor of love, for besides the real help Maja and the children were in many little ways, the bright sayings of their pupils was the theme of many cheerful conversations between mother and daughter when alone.

“Mamma,” said Dorris after Maja and the children had left that morning, “they all thanked me so earnestly for what we have done for them, yet I think they have helped me as much as I have helped them.”

“I have had good results, too, from it,” replied the mother; “my mind has been pleasantly occupied and I have felt that I am doing some good in the world.”

“I never thought that I should have to study to keep in advance of Giacomo,” laughed Dorris, “but he has asked many questions that I could not answer until I asked you or examined the books that belonged to papa. Even Benedetto sets me to studying with his bright questions, and he and

Marietta have taught me to be patient. I am so glad that I have papa's books to consult, especially the encyclopedia, though all are good and useful. Papa was so wise; it appears to me I never asked him a question he could not answer."

"Yes, Dorris, you met with a great loss in losing your father, but God knows what is best; his ways are not our ways; we shall know these mysteries when we reach the other shore."

"I am glad that I was old enough to remember him and the beautiful walks we had over the mountain, and our talks when we sat down to rest, or when he was painting. We always lived so happily in our beautiful home. Oh, mother, could you ever leave here to go to Switzerland, as your relatives are always writing you to do?"

"No, Dorris; dearly as I loved my home there, this place is endeared to me by many sweet memories. Many changes have taken place in Switzerland since I left it, but my dear grandparents on my father's side still live, and I hope we can visit them soon."

The subject of her childhood's home was a pleasant theme to both, and was frequently discussed; but Dorothy had always spoken more of the place than the people; while on the contrary, in speaking of her mother's relatives on the shore of the North Sea, she spoke more of the people than the place.

Their conversation was interrupted by the appearance of a neighbor, who, having been to Cavanaugh, halted to leave a letter for Dorothy. It was from Switzerland, and she opened it with misgivings.

It was from Marie Durant, wife of her Uncle Jacob, and with voice trembling with emotion, Fräü Maurizius read it aloud to her daughter:

“MY DEAR NIECE DOROTHY,—I write to tell you that your beloved grandfather has gone to a higher life, and we are, as you will know, very sad. He had reached his ninetieth year, but was active for one of his age, and cheerful, always taking interest in his fellow-creatures while waiting to be called home.

“Grandma is in her eightieth year, but is strong and well for one of her age. They have firm belief that it is the climate of our beloved Switzerland that has prolonged their lives, and are of the opinion that had your husband lived here instead of in Italy he would have been spared to you and your daughter.

“Your grandfather’s funeral was the largest ever seen here. People came from all the villages around, which proved the estimation in which he was held.

“Although you have always preferred to remain away from us, I think you will now see the propriety of returning to your native land. All your grandfather’s property was portioned off by him, and with his decision, we are all satisfied. He had, as you know, three houses. The one by the bridge, where he and grandma have always lived, he bequeathed to his son Matthias and his wife Katharine, who have had their home there; and

as there is considerable land there, they and their three boys will have a good home.

“My husband and I will remain in the house that we rented from your grandfather and which he bequeathed to us; and the house near the river is yours, and will make a pleasant home for you. It has been newly repaired, and being larger than you need, you could select lodgers, if you choose, from the many tourists who apply, and thus have rent for at least one of your rooms. There is nothing to send you, as your patrimony as daughter of his son Daniel is comprised in the house and the land about it. Your grandma is anxious that you should come and take possession, not only to have you near her, but that your daughter may be under the influence of our pastor and our church, as she hopes that the religion which prevails there has no hold upon her, but that she will unite with the denomination to which all her family for generations have belonged.

“All your relatives send you loving greeting.

“Your affectionate aunt,

“MARIE.”

Dorothy laid the letter down and looked at Dorris, who was pale from anxiety over what bade fair to be the outcome of this letter.

“If your father were here with us I should have no trouble in deciding for the right; now I must choose, Dorris, and I see no other way but to go,” said her mother. “What Aunt Marie says in regard to your bias in religious matters is entirely correct, as is her opinion in regard to our patrimony. It would be far better for us to live upon

it than to rent it for the pittance it would bring, and to still continue paying rent for this cottage. The sale of pictures your dear father painted has for six years kept us in comfort in our frugal way of living, but the stock in time must become exhausted. It will be a terrible trial to me to leave this place, endeared to me by memories of your father; you must help me to bear it cheerfully, Dorris."

"I will help you, mamma," said Dorris, tearfully; "it is what papa would wish us to do, I think. Did he know all your relatives? Did he like the one who wrote this letter?"

"He saw them only when he visited me at my grandfather's. As you know, my parents died when I was a mere child, and I went to live with my mother's sister near the shore of the North Sea, not far from the home of your father. It was while there that we became acquainted, and a short time before we were married I came to stay with grandfather and grandmother. Your father admired them greatly, but did not care much for Aunt Marie. She is abrupt in manner, and so plain spoken that it amounts to rudeness, although she flatters herself that it is frankness. She means well, but it is her way, and it appears she cannot change it, and those accustomed to her don't mind it. Your father was so refined and courteous that it was not to be expected that he would admire

Aunt Marie, for her frankness, like that of many others, gives one the impression of coarseness, and was always repelling to his gentle, sensitive nature."

"If we should go to Switzerland, mamma, would we have to stay there; could we never come back to dear Mont Rosso?"

"I cannot answer that, dear; I have no more idea than have you what awaits us there. It may be that you will like your relatives and new home so well that you will not wish to come back."

"And this house—must we give it up to strangers?" asked Dorris, tears again rising to her eyes as she glanced about her.

"This house is not ours, as you know, Dorris; we will give it up to the owner, and he will do as he thinks best with it."

"But, mamma, if we find that we are not happy there, and wish to come back, and find strange people in this dear house and strange children playing upon this terrace and plucking the roses that dear papa planted, and we could not come in any more, and—" Dorris could say no more; she must give relief to her feelings by tears, and she wept aloud.

"Oh, Dorris," said her mother in trembling voice, "I have thought of all this many, many times. I knew that the time would come when it would be advisable to return to my native place, and I dreaded making you unhappy, for I know

the love you have for this home, the only one you have ever known.”

Dorris was recalled to her deep sense of filial affection by the tone of her mother's voice more than by the words themselves. How often in the early days of their bereavement had she heard her mother speak in that tone, so different from the cheerful buoyancy of former years, and resolved to put self aside and not add one drop to the cup of that loving mother's anxiety.

“We will go, mamma,” she said; “I am sure that papa would think it best. You will be glad to see your relatives again, and I, too, will do my best to be glad. Do you know the way, mamma? Where will we go first?”

The heart of Fräü Maurizius grew light at the thought of the journey and joy that Dorris was willing to leave her loved home at the call of duty, and could not but rejoice that she would again be in the old home of her childhood.

“I know the way well, Dorris,” she said. “First we go to Como, and from there to Chiavenna; then on to Maloja, and next to Ober-Engadine. Then we go down into the valley, where there are many small villages, until we come to Schuls, which is my old home.”

“Mamma, you look so happy at the thought of seeing your old home; I did not know that you longed to go.”

“Nor did I, Dorris; the way has never been opened until now. The death of dear grandfather makes changes which provides a comfortable and inexpensive living for us. It is, moreover, our own.”

“We will commence to get ready right away, won’t we, mamma?”

“Yes; our lease here will be up in two weeks, which will give us plenty of time without being hurried; and first we must tell Maja, and she will take the message to the owner of the house and will help us in every way. You may go now and tell her, Dorris.”

The walk up the mountain was quickly accomplished, and Maja and the children were deeply disturbed by the unexpected news, Benedetto and Marietta expressing their sorrow in earnest words, but Giacomo was silent, in his dark eyes the look of melancholy they bore the day that Dorris commenced to teach.

“I have faith that you will come back,” said Maja; “you will never be as contented in Switzerland as you are in your pretty home on Mont Rosso. Yes, I feel sure you will come back.”

Dorris smiled; she almost felt it a prophecy, and the sad look left the face of the children.

“If no one has engaged you to help them, will you come down to-morrow and help us, Giacomo?” she asked.

He nodded; he could not trust his voice to speak; and having Maja's promise to go to Pallanza immediately to see the owner of the cottage, Dorris went home.

That evening, when mother and daughter were sitting on the terrace, upon which the moon was shining with mild splendor, they were agreeably surprised by a visit from the owner and his wife and the pastor of Cavandone and several other friends and neighbors who had heard of the purposed change and had come to express their sorrow at parting with them, and each was presented when leaving with a bouquet of the beautiful roses as a parting gift.

Two busy weeks went by and the pretty cottage stood empty, and Dorothy and Dorris sat upon the terrace waiting for the time to start upon their walk to Suna, from whence they were to take the boat on Lake Maggoire.

"Mamma, will I have time to take a last walk to the stone wall?" asked Dorris.

"Yes; there is no need to hurry; we have given ourselves an hour by rising that much earlier than usual."

Dorris ran down the path and soon reached the spot where six years before she had met Fräulein von Ernstein.

Flowers bloomed everywhere, and beautiful as the spot had always seemed to her, it was more so

now that she was to bid it farewell. For her mother's sake she resolved to shed no tears; and she went quickly back to the terrace and found Maja and the children, who had come to bid them good-bye.

Tears were in Maja's eyes, and she seemed at a loss for words to express her sorrow at parting with them. Giacomo stood aloof, pale and silent, but when the others turned to go he held out his hand to them in wordless farewell and left the terrace.

When later, mother and daughter had bidden farewell to their loved home, and were going down the mountain to the lake, in passing a high rock they heard the sound of suppressed weeping, and halted to listen.

It was Giacomo, who had come there to see them pass, and hearing them stop, came from his hiding place, his eyes swollen from weeping.

"Oh, Giacomo," said Dorris, "do not make it too hard for us to leave you all and dear Mont Rosso."

"I cannot help it," he sobbed; "I feel just as I did the day they took our mother away."

"Dear Giacomo," said Fräu Maurizius, her eyes filling with tears, "be the good boy you have always been and a comfort to your grandmother."

"Say you will come back if you can, and I will look forward to that time," he said.

"If we are not contented there, and can get the cottage we have left, and it seems for any reason

better that we should come back, we will," said she kindly.

A happy smile passed over the swarthy face of the boy. He again bade them farewell, and, watching until he could see them no longer, he went up the mountain path to his home.

CHAPTER IV.

DORRIS AND HER NEW RELATIONS.

The setting sun was gleaming softly one evening upon the large old-time stone house by the bridge near Schuls, in Switzerland, tinting with rosy hues the ripples upon the river which glided past on its way to the sea.

Within the wide doorway, in her arm-chair, sat Grandma Durant, and on the porch near her were her two sons, Matthias and Jacob, stalwart, elderly men with black eyes and black hair mixed with gray, and near them stood their wives, Katharine and Marie.

The sons of both families had congregated upon the bridge, but near the porch with his elders was Nicholas Durant, their cousin from Ardez, all awaiting the arrival of Dorothy and Dorris, who were expected any moment.

Nicholas was an overgrown boy, with fair complexion and light brown hair, large, round blue eyes, and large hands and feet. He was restlessly walking to and fro the path in front of the porch, his hands in the pockets of his wide pants, halting occasionally to glance up the road which ran along the river.

“It is just eighteen years since Dorothy married and went to Italy,” remarked Marie to her husband. “It seems but yesterday since I heard her say about twenty times a day: ‘I don’t know; I will ask my husband.’”

“That was very respectful of her, I think,” remarked Jacob.

“Yes, Jacob,” said his wife, sharply, “but what patience would you have with me if I should run to ask you whether I should put a sprig of parsley in the soup and get you to time the boiling of the eggs for breakfast? She appeared to think he knew everything, and, moreover, was the best man in the world; but how could we know what he was?—he was a stranger here.”

“Do not go beyond the truth, Marie,” here interposed the calm voice of Grandma Durant. “Although we were not acquainted with the relatives of Victor Maurizius, we do know that his father was pastor of a church in a town or village on the shore of the North Sea, and his mother one of the best of Christian women. We also know that in the years that he lived, Dorothy’s letters spoke always of the happiness of her life with him, which is all the testimony one needs in his favor, for to that sweet, gentle creature a harsh word would have been like a blow.”

“It is strange that Dorothy always preferred

living away from us," remarked Katharine, reflectively.

"Dorothy was the daughter of the eldest son, and therefore had privileges that none others could have," replied Marie.

"I would like to know who this Cousin Dorothy is, and how she came to be a relation of mine," here interrupted Nicholas; "I never could understand when uncle tried to tell me."

"If you have not learned from hearing her so constantly spoken of lately I don't see how you will ever learn," remarked Marie, sharply.

"One never knows how to take Cousin Marie," said Nicholas, gazing upon her in open-mouthed surprise.

"You must take her as a cow takes salt," suggested Jacob; "if it is not grass, it is something else."

"Come, Nicholas, I will tell you who Dorothy is," said Grandmother Durant from the doorway, "but you must not walk about, but come and sit here by me. Our eldest son was named Daniel, a tall, straight man, with eyes as bright as stars. He was quick and energetic in his way, entirely different from that of Matthias and Jacob, who are slow of speech and movement. In his twenty-second year he married a fair young girl from the valley of the Munster. Their only child, a daughter, is the Cousin Dorothy we are expecting this

evening. The mother died when Dorothy was but three years old; then our son Daniel was called home, and relatives on her mother's side took the little one home with them. She staid there until she was seventeen, then came to us and remained a year, when she was married to an artist with whom she became acquainted in her northern home. Dorothy was a beautiful, gentle creature, and we loved her as well as we did our own children."

"But how did she become related to me?" inquired Nicholas.

"Her grandfather and yours were half brothers."

"Yes," said Nicholas, reflectively; "and this daughter, Dorris—how old is she? Is she pretty?"

"She is about sixteen, and if resembling either father or mother, cannot fail of being pretty. Victor Maurizius was a handsome man, and, what is better, a Christian. I will add that Dorothy, with her fair hair, pure white and pink complexion, and dark blue eyes, was in direct contrast to his dark brown hair, hazel eyes, and olive complexion."

"Is Cousin Dorothy young as these two?" pointing to the two matrons.

"She is about the age of her aunts, Katharine and Marie. Matthias and Jacob did not marry until past thirty."

"Is Dorris good tempered?"

"If like her mother she must be sweet and gen-

tle, and her father was pleasant in manner and disposition."

"You are faithful at asking questions, Nicholas," remarked Marie; "wouldn't you like to know how many pairs of shoes she has and how many ribbons for her hair?"

"It is no wonder I ask," replied Nicholas in an aggrieved tone; "it is a great thing to have a girl cousin, when we have had none but boys."

"I think that cousins like my boys are something to be proud of," said Marie, severely. "I have yet to learn that sons are to be despised because there are no girls."

"And my boys," said Katharine, "you should be proud to acknowledge them as cousins."

"I often wonder how Dorothy could live after losing her husband," remarked Grandmother Durant; "she was of such a dependent, clinging nature. She would not decide anything without consulting her grandfather; then when married her husband was her friend, her adviser, her all in all. She appeared to live but in him."

"I think people should have a mind of their own and not be guided so much by other people's opinion," said Marie.

"The sun has disappeared behind the mountain and the evening air is growing cool, so I must move my chair to the sitting-room," said Grandmother Durant, as she arose to make the change. "Come

in and take supper with us, Nicholas, and wait for Dorothy."

"I would like to," replied the boy, wistfully, "but uncle always wants me at home of evenings. I will go now and come to-morrow."

"Yes, we can count upon your coming now, Nicholas," remarked Marie; "you will not be contented in Ardez when you know that Dorris is in Schuls."

"It is entirely right that he should come to help welcome his new relatives," said Grandmother Durant; "I wish Dorothy to see that we are all glad to have her come."

The others remained in the porch, and at twilight the travelers arrived and were warmly welcomed; then all went in to the good supper which had been awaiting them.

"My great-grandchild is a fine girl," said Grandmother Durant with pride; "healthy, well developed, sprightly, and sensible. She has the brilliant eyes of my son Daniel and the olive complexion and auburn hair of her father."

Dorris on her side was equally pleased with Grandmother Durant; she admired the beautiful white hair, the dignified manner, stately presence, and gentle tone of voice. But she was bewildered by the strong resemblance between her great-uncles, and did not believe that she would ever be able to distinguish one from the other. There were also

a Matthias and a Jacob in each family of boys, and all spoke in monosyllables in reply to her, as did their fathers. She was glad when it came time to retire, for she was weary and longed to be alone with her mother.

The next morning they went to their own house to prepare for the arrival of their household goods, and Dorothy was surprised that the house she once thought large was so small.

The rooms of which Marie had written as being newly repaired were in great contrast to the others, which looked dingy and bare; but to Dorothy it was the place where her father and mother had lived their few years of happy married life, and her heart warmed toward it.

"I am so glad to see dear old Mont Pisoc," said she, going to the window which overlooked the river; "is it not beautiful, Dorris?"

"It is so dark and dull looking, mother, and the clouds resting upon it are cold and gray."

"But it is late in the season now, Dorris; wait until spring and the new foliage comes. On pleasant days and evenings until cold weather you can take lovely walks over it and gather wild flowers."

"Mont Rosso always looks green and pretty, mamma, with rosy clouds resting over it."

"We will not make comparisons, dear, but will let our eyes rest only on the beauty about our new home. When you get accustomed to the place, the



The Bridge.

river and bridge and the mountains will be as attractive, I hope, to you as the scenery about Lake Maggiore. We will take pleasant walks together when we get our house arranged as we wish."

"It can never be as lovely as the home we left, mamma, but we will make the very best of the change. Do the relatives seem the same as when you left them?"

"My uncles look much older and appear more quiet than they used to be. But I see no change in grandmother; she is the same intelligent, sensible, kind, and motherly old lady I have always known."

"Did you like to visit your Great-Uncle Nicholas at Ardez, mamma?"

"Yes; when the grandmother of your Cousin Nicholas was living it was a charming place to go, and her two bachelor sons were kindness itself to me. Then Daniel, the older one, married, and at his death left his son to the care of his Brother Nicholas; so now there are but two in the beautiful home, my Great-Uncle Nicholas, who is very wealthy, and the Cousin Nicholas, who is coming to call upon us this morning."

At that moment there came the sound of vigorous knocking upon the open hall door, and Dorris left the breakfast-room window to see the visitor, followed by Dorothy.

CHAPTER V.

A FIRST CALL.

On the porch stood Nicholas Durant, looking wonderingly upon the mother and daughter, but giving no utterance to his thoughts.

"You are our Cousin Nicholas from Ardez?" said Dorothy kindly, and extending her hand as she spoke.

"Yes, I am your cousin and cousin to your daughter," and he held out his hand to Dorris, after giving that of Dorothy a cordial shake.

"Uncle Nicholas and all the rest of us are glad you have come," he said as he took the chair Dorothy offered. "I hope you were glad to come, and Cousin Dorris was glad to come," turning to Dorris, whose hand was yet tingling from his strong grasp.

"It is very pleasant to me to be again in my old home, Cousin Nicholas," replied Dorothy; "of course, all is strange to Dorris, but I am hoping she will in time like Switzerland as well as she loves Italy."

"Uncle Nicholas said to tell you he would come to see you if he was able; but he is not, so you must come to see him."

“Thank you; he is as well as usual, I hope?”

“Oh, he is only lame, which one must expect of an old soldier wounded in the leg.”

“I have often told Dorris of the lovely violets your grandmother had in the windows that looked out on the balcony; are there any growing there now?”

“That I don’t know,” replied Nicholas, stolidly. “Ursel is all the time dragging flower-pots in and out, but whether they have violets in them I can’t say.”

“Who is Ursel, Nicholas?” asked Dorris.

“She is our old housekeeper, and there is plenty for her to do in a large house like ours, besides others from the village to help her by the day.”

“I suppose it is much larger than our house on Mont Rosso?”

“I should think so,” replied the young man, rather scornfully; “it is not likely that any houses in the hamlets there could equal ours, when Ardez and Schuls can’t show another like it. It’s the finest place I have ever seen in all the twenty years of my life. Why, the stables and granaries and other out-buildings are almost like a village, and the cellar is finished as well as any part of the mansion, and has pillars like a church.”

“I have often thought of the old church in Ardez and of the beautifully carved doors; I suppose they are still there,” remarked Dorothy.

"Yes, I suppose so; I never noticed the doors. I don't care to go there, and would not go, only uncle will not let me stay at home. I don't like to stay in one place so long; would rather be out in the sunlight. I love to hear old Melchior preach, because it is on the street corners; and, besides, I can understand him."

"Where is Melchior now?" asked Dorothy, with interest. "Is he still gardening?"

"Yes; he takes care of the garden and grounds at the Sanitarium, and at another place in Schuls in summer, and in winter he lives with his relations in Sint. He was in America once when he was young."

"Yes, I remember, though I was but a child. It was at the time dear papa died, and I went to live with my mother's relatives. I was but four years old, but I remember hearing them speak of Melchior sailing to America."

"He says he carried you on his shoulder many a time when you were a baby."

"Yes, he was always welcome at my father's house, and grandfather and grandmother paid him every respect. He is a sincere Christian, always doing good in his humble path in life."

"This is only the beginning of my visits to you, Cousin Dorothy," said Nicholas, rising to go; "when snow comes I will come and take Cousin Dorris out sleighing. You need not look sur-

prised; I am in earnest. We have plenty of fine horses in our stalls, as Dorris shall see when snow comes."

"I wish our household goods were here, Nicholas, that I might offer you a cup of coffee," said Dorothy. "I suppose it has not gone out of fashion in Schuls to offer coffee to a caller?"

"I don't know whether it is in fashion or not, but I know that I would stay and take a cup of coffee with you if you had it. Cousin Marie said that she supposed you would bring your Italian customs with you, and have nothing to eat but onions and macaroni. I hate them both, but any time you offer coffee I will stay."

"Tell Aunt Marie that we have other things in Italy besides onions and macaroni," said Dorris as he passed out the door; "she should see the marrowy chestnuts that grow on Mont Rosso and the clusters of juicy, purple grapes."

"I will tell her," answered Nicholas, smiling and thereby showing two rows of large, strong white teeth, and he shook the small hand of Dorris and departed.

"Nicholas is a good boy," said Dorothy, as they returned to the broad window seat in the parlor, which they preferred to the chairs left there by Marie; "he has not seen much of the world, and, of course, is not so broad-minded as those who have traveled."

“But why need all our relatives think there are only substantial comforts to be found here, and speak so slightingly of Italy?”

“I do not wonder at Nicholas thinking this, for his uncle is a great land owner,” replied her mother. “They have everything needed in their way of living, and Nicholas would consider our simple home on Mont Rosso very poor indeed.”

“But we did not live a poor life, mamma. We were richer than Nicholas with all his wealth of land. We lived a beautiful life, especially when dear papa was with us.”

“Truly we did,” replied Dorothy, her beautiful eyes filling with tears. “But, Dorris, the time passed here lives in my memory as does that passed in Italy. It does not appear strange to me as to you, for my childhood days and a year of happy girlhood are associated with my father and his relatives, and all were kind and indulgent to me.”

Three days passed, and mother and daughter had made a complete transformation in the old house. It was really a comfortable home, made bright with the pretty things they had brought from the cottage on Mont Rosso, the handsome paintings they had kept in remembrance of the husband and father, among them the view of the old home on the North Sea, and their blooming plants.

They had been so busy adjusting their belong-

ings that there had been no time to think of study, but when all was completed Dorothy went to see the pastor to ask his religious instruction for Dorris, and also his advice as to a teacher to whom could be intrusted the continuance of the education for which a good foundation had been laid by Herr Maurizius and continued by Dorothy.

He promised to attend to both requests, and called the next day. He was gratified to find that Dorris had been thoroughly and faithfully trained in the Christian life, could answer all questions intelligently, and was a conscientious girl, who earnestly desired to perform to the best of her ability all the duties which devolved upon her. It was decided that she should read the good books he loaned her from his library, and at the coming and near communion should unite with the church.

He had also spoken for a teacher for her, and it was arranged that for two hours each morning she was to be one of a class of girls which met at the cottage of a widow in Schuls, who was known as a competent teacher.

Occupied with these pleasant duties, and in the society of her loved, companionable mother, time never hung heavily upon the hands of Dorris; the autumn glided away and winter was upon them, and she scarcely noticed the change from that of winters beside Lake Maggiore.

Her mother's relatives were kind to her in their

way, their only grievance being that she did not visit them so frequently as they desired.

One of their customs which did not meet with the views of Dorris was that of a meeting of relatives and friends at the houses of her Uncle Matthias or Jacob every Sunday afternoon. That they had been to church in the morning was sufficient excuse for Katharine and Marie to invite their acquaintances from neighboring villages to supper; whereupon much preparation was of necessity made, and the Sabbath not spent in the way to which Dorris and her mother had been accustomed, and they declined to accept the invitations.

“Dorris carries her head a little too high, and looks down upon us and our ways, and Dorothy, as usual, has no mind of her own, but must follow her lead,” said Marie, angrily, after one of these refusals.

“The girl would rather sit in her room like a cloistered nun and read religious books,” replied Katharine. “I never did care to see an old head upon young shoulders.”

“No, and she has no right to set herself up as being better than we are. If we had games and other amusements as some families do she might have reason to refuse to come, but when we only laugh and talk and enjoy a good supper, where is the fault, especially as we all go to church in the morning?”

Their dissatisfaction increased as time passed on, and they finally complained of Dorris to her mother.

“No, no; do not consider it pride in her,” said Dorothy. “She is but a child, and has no thought of setting up her opinion against her elders. She is glad to visit her grandmother and all of you, and often speaks of your kindness to her; but she prefers reading the books the pastor gave her to visiting on Sunday afternoons, and is happier to pass the day as she has always been accustomed in our Italian home.”

The first visit of Nicholas was by no means his last; not a week passed that he was not there twice if not three times, always remaining to supper.

“Uncle almost always worries if I stay after dark, but I can stay until then,” he would say, and Dorris would light her night lamp and go to her room to prepare the morrow’s lessons.

One evening she excused herself the moment supper was finished; whereat Nicholas was so offended that he resolved not to go again; but a day or so after a deep snow fell, and his resentment was forgotten. By Sunday morning the sun shone brightly, the air was tempered, the sleighing not to be surpassed, and Nicholas rose earlier than usual, and passed back and forth between the house and stables with such pre-occupied air and

appeared so full of business that it attracted the attention of his uncle.

“What is going on?” he asked. “I heard you working with the sleigh bells.”

“A large sleighing party is made up to go to Zernez; she will see herself for once driving behind a pair of handsome horses.”

“Who is she?” inquired the old man.

“Our new cousin in Schuls, whom you have not seen.”

“It seems to me that you are seeing the new cousin often enough for both,” commented his uncle.

“One should pay her some attention,” said Nicholas, sullenly; “she knows no one here except our young cousins in Schuls, and they never think of her.”

“You must bring her to see me; it is not likely that I will be able to go to see her.”

“I will if she can spare time from her books; it appears to me that she thinks of nothing but books,” and his face clouded.

At length all preparations were made, the glossy, well-fed horses champed their bits, the handsome sleigh was gay with brilliant robes, and the many bells tingled merrily in the clear morning air.

The short distance was soon traversed, and with a flourish Nicholas drew up before the cottage of Dorothy. He sprang out and knocked, but there

was no response. He knocked louder with like result, and then tried the door, but found it locked.

"There is nobody at home," said an old woman who happened to be passing. "They went to church; I saw them go; they go every Sunday."

"I did not suppose it was church time," said Nicholas, chagrined and disappointed; "I expected to get here earlier. Well, I will drive to Sint, and be back in half an hour."

Dorothy and her daughter had in the mean time enjoyed the service and were walking home, discussing the points of the good sermon, thus impressing it upon their minds, when they heard the sound of bells, and, turning, saw Nicholas, who beckoned to them to halt, and sprang from the sleigh and stood beside them.

"Come, Cousin Dorris," said he, "there is a sleighing party going to Zernez, about twenty sleighs, and a lively company of young people, and you will get acquainted with them all. The sleighing is so perfect that it is a joy to glide over it. Step in, Dorris, and let's be off."

"No, Cousin Nicholas, I thank you, but I will stay at home."

"What!" exclaimed Nicholas, "has the pastor forbidden your going anywhere on Sunday?"

"No, he has said nothing to me nor I to him in regard to it, but I do not wish to go anywhere to-day."

“Cousin Dorothy, have you no rule over her? Can you not command her to go with me?”

“No, Nicholas, I approve of the stand she has taken. We have never been accustomed to going pleasuring upon the Sabbath, believing it to be displeasing to our Heavenly Father; it is his holy day. We thank you for wishing to give Dorris pleasure, but she cannot go.”

Nicholas sprang into the sleigh, drew the lines upon the spirited horses, and in an instant was out of sight, while Dorothy and Dorris passed on to their home.

The next morning Nicholas paid a visit to Grandmother Durant, and Marie, who had from her window seen him enter, was on the point of starting out to see what his errand might be, when Katharine, with her apron over her head, looked in at the door.

“Come over to grandmother’s,” said she; “Nicholas is there; he has something on his mind, I am sure.”

Marie was not slow to obey; so the two followed directly in the wake of Nicholas, and stood by Grandmother Durant as he complained of the ill-treatment he had received from his new cousin.

“It is Dorothy’s fault,” said Marie, sharply; “she always held herself above us, and staid away from us, and is training her daughter in the same way.”

“Yes,” said Katharine, coming to the help of Marie, “they both act as if they did not care to associate with our friends. They are too good to come to our houses to supper on Sunday, and, of course, Nicholas, you cannot be surprised if Dorris refuses to go to a sleighing party with you.”

“Dorris is right,” said Grandmother Durant; “she is growing into a God-fearing woman, as was her mother and grandmother before her. I have always thought that your way of spending the afternoons of the blessed Sabbath not the right way, but it was the way you had been trained in your homes, and now that you are in homes of your own it comes natural to you to have your acquaintances gather about you on Sunday. It may be that the dear child is the one appointed to lead us into a better way, and if so I for one will not complain.”

“I shall never ask her to go sleighing with me again,” said Nicholas, angrily; “she will go my way and my day or not at all,” and he left the room and the house.

He went as frequently as ever to visit the Italian cousin, but made no mention of the sleighing party, but spoke of the pleasant walks they would take when spring came, to which Dorris listened, but made no response.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN WILD ROSES ARE IN BLOOM.

“Oh, mamma, Switzerland is lovely in the spring,” said Dorris one bright morning in April as she opened the door and inhaled the pure mountain air.”

“I knew you would like it, dear, and although this month has tears as well as smiles it is welcome,” replied her mother.

The winter was a thing of the past; snow which had covered the ground for most of the time had melted; fresh, bright green grass and other herbage was appearing in valleys and on hillsides; the gray clouds that rested above the peak of Mont Pisoc were dispersed by the beams of the sun, and nature was rejoicing in its resurrection.

No one rejoiced more in the passing away of winter than did Dorris. Her young heart thrilled at the song of birds, the blooming of flowers, and the tinkling of mountain rivulets.

She rejoiced, too, that she could look up with the reverent look of a loving child to the Father who created all this beauty.

She felt that she was accepted of him, was one of his beloved children, and after the sermon the

following day she was to acknowledge her allegiance to him before the world.

“It will not be long until I can set my plants out in the ground, mamma. When we see them in bloom it will remind us of our terrace in the old home.”

Mother and daughter were happily busy until late in the afternoon, and were sewing by the window which looked out upon the river, when they saw an old man coming up the path.

“It is Melchior,” said Dorothy, a glad light in her eyes; “run, Dorris, and invite him in.”

Dorris was quick to obey, and stretched her hand out in welcome to her mother’s old friend.

“The granddaughter of the good Daniel Durrant,” he said with a smile, “and has his brilliant dark eyes and his and Dorothy’s kind ways; I knew I would be welcome.”

“You are indeed,” said Dorothy, coming forward and clasping his hand. “Come in, Melchior, come in; you are always welcome.”

“Then you knew me, Dorothy?” said he, stepping in and taking the seat she offered. “That pleases me well. I thought I had faded from your memory. And this dear young girl also welcomed the old man kindly,” continued he, glancing at her.

“My mother’s friends are mine; I have often heard her speak of you,” replied Dorris, brightly,

scarcely able to keep her eyes from the wreath of choice violets he held in his hand.

“You are but little changed; I should have known you anywhere, Melchior. Your happy Christian life keeps you in peace, which shows in your cheerful countenance. I see that you are yet a lover of one of God’s good gifts,” nodding to the wreath of violets in his hand.

“Yes, I kept these over winter, and have brought them to your daughter. I would have come before now to tell you how glad I am to see you back in your old home, but it is a long walk from Sint. I heard your daughter was intending to unite with our church to-morrow, so waited until to-day that I might bring the violets. Will you accept of them, dear, from your grandfather’s and your mother’s old friend?” and he reached them to her.

“Indeed I will, and thank you,” said Dorris, eagerly. “They are lovely,” and she went out for a vase of water in which to keep them fresh.

“It was kind and thoughtful in you, Melchior, to remember my daughter at this time, so important in her young life. The flowers in themselves are the sweetest of gifts; no one but an experienced gardener, and one who loves his calling, could bring them to such perfection.”

“The great Master Gardener is the one who brings them to perfection. I am only one of his

instruments, and I thank him every day of my life that I am a gardener; it is a beautiful calling."

"It has been a healthful one to you, Melchior; it astonishes me that you have changed so little in the eighteen years since I saw you."

"Yes, every spring I am young again with my plants, for I am so happy in the new life about me; all the green things that were hidden in the earth's bosom springing out of cold and darkness into light and beauty, and I thank God that it keeps the Risen Redeemer ever before my eyes and mind. The germ of a new life is hidden away in the apparently dead seed, but I know that it will rise again."

"Do you talk to your plants as you used to do, Melchior?"

"Yes," smiled the old man; "who could help holding converse with them? When I set them in the earth I say, 'Now, children, you must thrive and grow and do honor to your gardener, that the master may say that you are in good hands,' and in the autumn when I cover them from the cold I say, 'Stay there now, children, in the loving bosom of mother earth until God the Great Gardener bids you come forth.'"

"Then your flowers are not only company for you, but they are food for thought," suggested Dorothy.

"Yes, all the year my plants encourage sacred

thoughts. They tell me that I too must soon lie down in the bosom of dear mother earth; and I say to them that the Master Gardener will see that the germ of a new life which is in this old body will rise again, and I rejoice that I am in good hands."

Dorris had placed the violets in water and sat listening with eager attention to the conversation.

"You must have a cup of coffee with us after your long walk," said Dorothy; "you and Dorris can get acquainted while I am preparing it," and she laid aside her sewing and went out.

"You are to-morrow intending to commence a life of service to the Lord, Dorris," said Melchior; "are you rejoicing that you have been privileged to receive such instruction as our good pastor has given you?"

"Yes, I am glad over all that I have learned," replied Dorris.

"You are right; knowledge is a treasure. Will you do more than feast yourself upon that knowledge? Will you make it of benefit to those less favored? Will you stay in the sunlight?"

"I don't think I quite understand you," said Dorris.

"Which is better, my child, for a plant to stay in a cold, dark cellar, knowing that outside the sun is shining and causing all plant life to grow and bloom, or to go out in the sunlight where the warm rays will cause new life to enter all the branches

which lead to the heart, thus causing it to thrive and grow and be of use to the Master?"

"I think the last is the best," replied Dorris, though not quite sure of the application.

"I also. Now think it out for yourself what I mean, Dorris; I see you are a little puzzled."

"I think you mean that I should live a cheerful, Christian life in the sunlight of God's promises; that I must not make my religious life gloomy and repelling to others, but strive to make the following of the Saviour so attractive and joyous that it will do work for the Master by bringing others to him."

"You are right," said Melchior. "Who should be cheerful if not a Christian?"

"I do not think I could have answered your question if I had not heard papa and mamma speak so often of cheerful Christians. Papa said we dishonored our dear Lord by appearing to think his service a burden. We should be his faithful soldiers, willing to obey his commands with joy and gladness."

"Truly we should; and there is another way in which we may live as plants in a dark, cold cellar. We may not be mindful to seek religious influences, such as prayer, Bible reading, and the society of our fellow-Christians, thus attaining no growth for ourselves nor helping others by our example to seek the sunlight."

The coffee was served and the three sat down to the simple meal with the pleasure which is always taken in the society of congenial friends. A blessing was asked, and the brown bread, sweet butter, stewed pears, and cheese were all that any one of the three craved, and for which they gave grateful thanks.

“Did you and Dorris become acquainted?” asked Dorothy, as she passed a second cup of coffee to Melchior.

“Enough to know that we are to be good friends,” replied he, smiling to Dorris, who sat opposite and who returned the smile.

As soon as the meal was finished Melchior set out upon his long walk to Sint.

“I like Melchior better than all my relations put together, excepting grandmother,” was the comment of Dorris when they were again alone.

Dorothy was somewhat startled at hearing this very candid opinion, and thought it best to put Dorris on her guard in case she might be inclined to make the same comparison in the presence of some one who might consider it her bounden duty to acquaint the relatives of it.

“Melchior is an educated man and a reader,” said she; “his occupation takes him among cultured people; and more than all, he is an active Christian, searching ever for chances to do work for his Master. Our relations, on the other hand,

have led narrow, restricted lives; have been what one might call clannish, not mingling with others who could give them new ideas and discuss with them what is going on in the land. They do not care for reading, and are satisfied with the chit-chat and gossip that rules in their little world."

"Grandmother does seem different," remarked Dorris, reflectively.

"Yes, for the few advantages she has had she is a remarkable woman. In her early days she had but little means and much care, but gave her sons the best education possible in this secluded hamlet, where they have lived. It seems to me that your uncles were brighter and more companionable in their earlier years than now; their wives have not been of help in influencing them into broader and more public spirited channels."

"Yes, dear grandmother is all right, but I cannot admire my aunts. They seem anxious to depreciate you and make you appear of no account in comparison with themselves."

"That is in a great measure my own fault, dear; I am not resolute in holding my own with them. I have but little self-confidence; am too easily influenced by the opinions of others. I never was self-sustaining, but always inclined to lean upon some one stronger than myself. No words can tell how I missed your father, who was such a support and counsellor, and now that he is gone I find my-

self as the years pass on leaning more and more upon you. I really do not mind the disagreeable ways of my aunts, for they certainly are very kind to us, and I hope that you will learn to like them."

"I will try, mamma, but I wish they would treat you more respectfully."

The whole day had been clear and beautiful, but before sunset dark clouds arose and were hurried before the high wind, the sun was obscured, and for a few minutes the earth was deluged by a storm of rain and hail.

"I do hope that Melchior has reached home," said Dorothy, anxiously. "I should be too sorry if in doing us a kindness he should get wet and take cold."

"He could stop at some house on the way, mamma; any one would take an old man in out of the rain."

"Yes, and would be entertaining an angel, and perhaps not unawares, for Melchior is one who always keeps his lamp trimmed and burning that it may give light to all who are in the house."

The storm was quickly over, the sun shone again brilliantly for a few minutes, then descended behind Mont Pisoc, but the air remained scented with the odors of budding trees and plants refreshed by the shower.

The next day proved to be clear and serene, outwardly and inwardly one of the happiest Dorris

had known in her pleasant life. Only the "touch of a vanished hand" was needed to make it the happiest. She felt it to be a blessed privilege to be numbered among the followers of the Saviour, and Dorothy was no less happy.

"I hope her dear papa knows it; I am sure he knows it," was her thought during the service. "It was his training and example which, with God's blessing, made our daughter the Christian she is. I am sure he is rejoicing in heaven as we are upon earth."

Nicholas, too, was in cheerful mood over the communion and admission of Dorris into the visible church, but from a very different reason. He was glad that the preparatory instruction was over and Dorris free to give some of her time and companionship to him.

Jubilant over this thought, he set out for Schuls and the cottage by the river the next morning, filled with the importance of a proposition to Dorothy and her daughter.

He found Marie there before him, having brought a letter which was addressed to herself, but more nearly concerned Dorothy.

"Take a seat, Cousin Nicholas," said Dorris, who admitted him; "Aunt Marie has just brought us a letter from a gentleman, a professor in a college in Berlin, who is a guest at the Sanitarium

during his vacation, and wishes to lodge in our two spare rooms."

"What does he want of two rooms?" inquired Nicholas; "he can't sleep in but one at a time, unless he changes about in the night."

"He needs more than a place simply to snore in, as you do, Nicholas," quoth Marie, sharply; "the Professor is a gentleman and scholar, and stays in his room reading and writing most of the day, so, of course, wishes a fresh one to sleep in, as any simpleton should know."

"Why can't he stay with his family in vacation, instead of bothering here?" commented Nicholas, sullenly.

"He has no family except two motherless little boys, who are with their mother's relatives."

"Oh, I know who he is," ejaculated Nicholas; "it is Professor Strahl. Why didn't you say so at first?"

"It didn't strike me that it was absolutely necessary to inform you, seeing that you are not the one to whom he has applied for rooms," replied Marie in a sarcastic tone.

"That doesn't keep me from knowing him," rejoined Nicholas.

Marie deigned to waste no more words upon him. She turned to Dorothy. "There is nothing to hinder you from letting Dr. Strahl have the rooms,"

she said. "You don't need them, with no one here but you and Dorris."

"No, we can spare them well; and as you and Uncle Jacob are well acquainted with him, you know that he is a person that I could feel satisfied to take into our home."

"To be sure. If he is good enough for us, he is good enough for you. We had plenty of room for him and have three boys. He pays well and is no trouble to anybody."

"But, Aunt Marie, he wrote to you, thinking you were still in this house; he does not know that there are new people here whom he might not like. We must tell him this; it would not be right to keep him in ignorance of it."

"What difference is that to him whether you or I run the house? The rooms are here, and that is what he is asking for. All there is to do is to keep them in order. He goes to the Sanitarium every morning at 10, and stays two hours; and you have all that time to fix his rooms, and slow as you are I think you ought to manage to get them in order in that time. He goes to the hotel in Schuls for his meals, so you will have no bother about his board. He goes quietly in and out, and except a courteous greeting from him if you chance to meet on the stairs or in the hall you will hear no speech of him."

"And he has eyes like gimlets, which bore

through you and come out at the back," interloped Nicholas, who had revived from the last thrust given him by Marie, and now laughed boisterously at his own wit.

"Nicholas sometimes hits the mark," commented Marie. "Yes, the Doctor has the most piercing eyes I have ever seen."

"What does Grandmother Durant say to my giving him the two rooms?" questioned Dorothy.

"She says if you care to take any one into your family there is no one who would suit you better than Dr. Strahl."

"And you, Dorris; what do you say?" asked her mother, anxiously.

"I say yes, mother; he will be company for us and very little trouble."

This reply decided Dorothy, calling forth a sneering smile from Marie, although the opinion of Dorris coincided exactly with her own.

"Well, I suppose that settles it," commented she, briskly; "so I will go home; are you going with me, Nicholas, or are you intending to be a fixture here?"

"Which ever pleases me best, Cousin Marie; I think to be a fixture here most agreeable," and he settled himself back in his chair with his hands deep in his pockets.

"What have you in mind, Nicholas?" asked Marie with alert curiosity.

“I have two things in mind, Cousin Marie; one is not to go home with you and the other is not to leave this spot until Cousin Dorothy tells me what day she and Dorris will come to Ardez to pay uncle a visit, that I may drive over for them.”

“We can walk there some pleasant day, Nicholas; it is not worth while for you to trouble to drive here for us,” said Dorothy.

“People who cannot ride must walk, but this is not the case with you,” he replied, jingling the loose coin in his pocket with the air of a very wealthy person indeed; “so let us hear no more of walking, when there are spans of fat horses in the stalls suffering for exercise.”

“You can settle that matter among yourselves; I am out of it,” said Marie, opening the door preparatory to departing, “but one thing I would advise, Dorothy, and that is to let him come for you, for one can see that he is worrying for a chance to show off his fine horses.”

“Uncle thinks you should have said something about coming before this,” remarked Nicholas as soon as the door closed behind Marie. “He says he thinks you have been slow about paying him this attention.”

“It is natural to suppose that he should be the one to make the first call, seeing that we are the strangers and he an old resident,” suggested Dorris.

"You forget, cousin, that he is an old man and is lame from being wounded when he was a soldier. He always harps upon that wound when he don't want to go to places. But he is always wondering what you and Dorris look like, and I have described you until I am tired, so now I want him to see you and judge for himself."

"But would it not be better to wait a little longer, Cousin Nicholas?" asked Dorris. "Mamma has often told me how beautiful the country is between Schuls and Ardez, and I would like to see it at its best, as I am sure would mamma."

"Yes, dear, in next month the wild flowers will be in bloom, the mountains will be green, and the meadows and fields beautiful," assented Dorothy; "we will go then."

"And I am to come for you with my best span of horses?" asked Nicholas, eagerly.

"Yes, if you will insist upon being so kind. We thank uncle heartily for the invitation and you for being willing to come for us."

"But you must set a day for me to come or I will not move off this chair if it takes until this time to-morrow to make up your minds."

Dorothy said nothing; she looked to Dorris to reply.

"Mamma has often spoken of the beauty of the wild roses that run over the ruins of the old castle

of Ardez," said she; "when they are in bloom come for us and we will go."

"Yes," echoed Dorothy, with a glad remembrance of the wild roses, "come then, Nicholas, and we will go," and Nicholas arose and went away smiling in supreme satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DURANTS IN COUNCIL.

Dorothy replied to the letter of Dr. Strahl, explaining that she was the niece of Herr Jacob Durant, was now owner of the cottage, and if he yet desired to come the rooms were at his service. His reply came promptly, saying he would come, and in a few days he took possession, happy to be in a place to which he was accustomed, and feeling that he was at home with the intelligent and agreeable relatives of Jacob Durant.

He took his morning walk, then returned to his books, and, as Marie had said, was no trouble to any one, mother and daughter scarcely realizing that there was a third person under the roof.

Dorris had written to Maja shortly after reaching Switzerland, and waited for a reply. She knew that Maja could not write, but wondered that the children whom she had taught to use the pen did not reply, and was on the point of writing again when one came from Giacomo. He wrote that all were well and were glad to get her letter; that his father had been home from Genoa, and wanted Giacomo to return with him, but finding he had a good position with a gardening firm at Pallanza,

did not insist. He added that he got good wages from the owners of the gardens, but left it in their hands, and they all hoped that Dorris and her mother would return to Mont Rosso. His father had expressed much surprise at the improvement in his children, and was deeply grateful to Fräu Maurizius and her daughter.

“It appears to me that Giacomo is keeping something back; he has not spoken his mind fully in that letter,” remarked Dorris when she finished. “Why does he not get his money from the gardener? I know that he always tells the truth, but I do not believe he has told us all.”

“Giacomo is not accustomed to letter writing, as you see he has not entered into details on any subject.”

“I will run over and read the letter to grandmother; she is always glad to see me.”

“Do, dear child; I am glad you are going of your own accord; I have always to suggest it as a duty.”

Dorris put on her sun hat and went out softly singing:

“Red clouds in the heavens,
White foam upon the sea,
And beautiful, oh beautiful,
Is the whole world to me.”

Her grandmother was indeed glad to see her and to listen to the letter, which Dorris had scarcely

finished when Nicholas walked in with a half-open rose in his hand, which he held out to Dorris.

“Oh, it is beautiful,” she said; “where did you get it?”

“Yes, where, I wonder? Where did I tell you that wild roses grew? I suppose you have forgotten also that you are to visit us when the roses are in bloom on the castle of Ardez, or, as I should say, the ruins of the castle of Steinberg?”

“Yes,” nodded Grandmother Durant, “she will go, Nicholas, and see for herself the fine, large house you have there, the vineyards, the orchards, and beautiful grounds. She will be so interested in the beauty of the place that she will never think of the ruins and wild roses.”

“I will go home now, grandmother,” said Dorris. “Cousin Nicholas may wish to chat with you, and my visit was about over when he came.”

But no; Nicholas had come to see Dorothy about the visit. He arose and accompanied her home, and it was decided that they should go the following day, and then Nicholas returned to Ardez.

The next morning he was there at the appointed time with a fine carriage and handsome pair of spirited horses, and, Dorothy and Dorris being ready, they soon reached the substantial residence of their Uncle Nicholas, who met them at the door and welcomed them cordially.

“And this is Dorothy—Daniel’s daughter?” he

said; "and Dorris, his granddaughter? The family need not be ashamed to own her; she is a handsome girl."

The old housekeeper, Ursel, came in to greet the guests, then hurried back to the dinner, now nearing completion. She soon returned with a damask linen table cloth in hand, and Dorris sprang up and offered to assist.

"Just tell me where the dishes are," she said, "and I will set the table for you."

Ursel showed her appreciation of the offer by opening china closets and pointing out the ware to be used, and Dorris arranged all deftly and quickly, aided by some suggestions from the uncle, who loved to watch her flitting about the great room, as did young Nicholas.

"An active, useful girl," he commented. "I see, Dorothy, that you are training her right."

"Yes, I wish her to know every branch of woman's work; but tell me, uncle, have you yet the beautiful violets which were in the windows on the balcony?"

"I don't know; we will have to ask Ursel."

"And the wild roses, uncle," added Dorris. "Mamma has often told me how beautiful they are. We are to go to see them this afternoon."

"Stay with us, Dorris," said the old man; "you can have roses at any time, but not good company like ours."

“But not the wild roses that mamma saw growing on the ruins.”

“What ruins is she speaking of?” inquired the uncle, turning to Nicholas.

“She means the old castle of Steinberg.”

“We will persuade her to save that for another visit; it will be an inducement for her to come here again.”

“But I am afraid they will be gone; they are in bloom now; Nicholas brought us one.”

“But it is too early for them, child; he must have gotten that from some conservatory.” Whereupon Nicholas laughed aloud.

“I did not tell her it was a wild rose,” he said; “I only showed it to her and reminded her that she had promised to come when the wild roses were in bloom.”

“Deception,” commented Uncle Nicholas; “a falsehood is a falsehood, no matter what the temptation may be; and I acknowledge it was a temptation, for it cannot but be lonely here for you, Nicholas. It will not be long until all roses are in bloom, and I hope they will come and pay us a long visit.”

Dinner was now served, and was a triumph of culinary skill; they sat long at the table, and in a short while after returning to the parlor it was time to go to Schuls.

Their Uncle Nicholas was so happy and cheered

by the visit that he was anxious for them to promise they would come at least once a week, but Dorothy assured him that she could not allow her Cousin Nicholas to come for them so often, and after several delays on his part to keep them longer the conveyance was at the door and they were driven home at sunset, both glad to be again in their own little home.

A new impetus was given to the visits of Nicholas after that time. He called every day, sometimes walking from Ardez, but more frequently in a light carriage to take Dorris out for a drive, an invitation which she always declined. He appeared to have something upon his mind, and one day instead of inviting Dorris to take a drive he spoke for Dorothy.

“Uncle wants to see you upon some business, and I have come for you,” he said.

“On business?” echoed Dorothy. “Is Dorris to go?”

“No, only you; he will see Dorris later,” and he smiled a satisfied smile.

Wonderingly Dorothy prepared for the drive, and when she reached Ardez found the old gentleman on the porch to receive her.

“I thought you would come,” he said, “although you do not know the good fortune that is in store for you. Come in while I tell you.”

Dorothy followed him into the parlor, took the

chair he offered, and waited to hear what he had to say.

"I am an old and feeble man, Dorothy," he averred, "and may soon be called hence, and wish to benefit Daniel's daughter before I go. I want you to give up your cottage and come and live here. Nicholas will be lonely after I am gone, and wishes no company but Dorris and yourself. Dorris shall be co-heir with Nicholas in this estate and all I possess, share and share alike. Nicholas is rich without it, having inherited all the property of his father, being the only child. I pray that you will gratify an old man's perhaps last request."

"I don't know what to say," replied Dorothy; "I am bewildered by the proposition. I must consult with Dorris."

"There is no need of putting it off for Dorris to decide," commented Nicholas, coming in at that moment and taking a seat near them; "you cannot expect a girl of her age to know what is best for her."

"She is my counsellor in all things since I lost my husband," replied Dorothy, with tears filling her eyes.

"She is worthy to consult," said Uncle Nicholas, sincerely, "and owing to coming business arrangements I wish to know in three days what you will do, and can only hope you will accept my offer."

"But our cottage, uncle; what would we do about it?"

"I can rent it for you at a good price; you will have no care about it or anything else, but both of you have every comfort as long as you live."

"I will consult with Dorris," said the mother, rising to go.

"Consult grandmother and Cousin Marie and Cousin Katharine, if you want advice that will benefit Dorris," advised Nicholas, curtly.

"Why, do they know of this?" asked Dorothy, dropping back into her seat.

"Well, if you must go, Cousin Dorothy, I am ready to take you," said Nicholas quickly, to conceal his embarrassment at her question, and bidding her Uncle Nicholas good-bye, they were soon on their way.

"I will wait until you have talked with Dorris and can tell Uncle Nicholas what she says, which I know will be 'yes and thank you, too,'" suggested Nicholas when they reached the cottage gate.

"No; I would rather have you call the next time you come to see grandmother," replied Dorothy. "Dorris must have time to think it over," and Nicholas had to be content.

Dorris soon convinced her mother that there need be no time lost in considering the matter; she refused absolutely to listen to such a proposition, and Dorothy's heart grew light at hearing it.

"I was so afraid you would see it in a different way; such a splendid home would be a strong temptation to many girls," she said, eagerly.

"It is none for me, with Cousin Nicholas thrown into the bargain," said Dorris, and then both laughed gleefully—glad that there was no need to think of it again. Dorothy rejoiced that it was not left to her to decide; she dreaded responsibility.

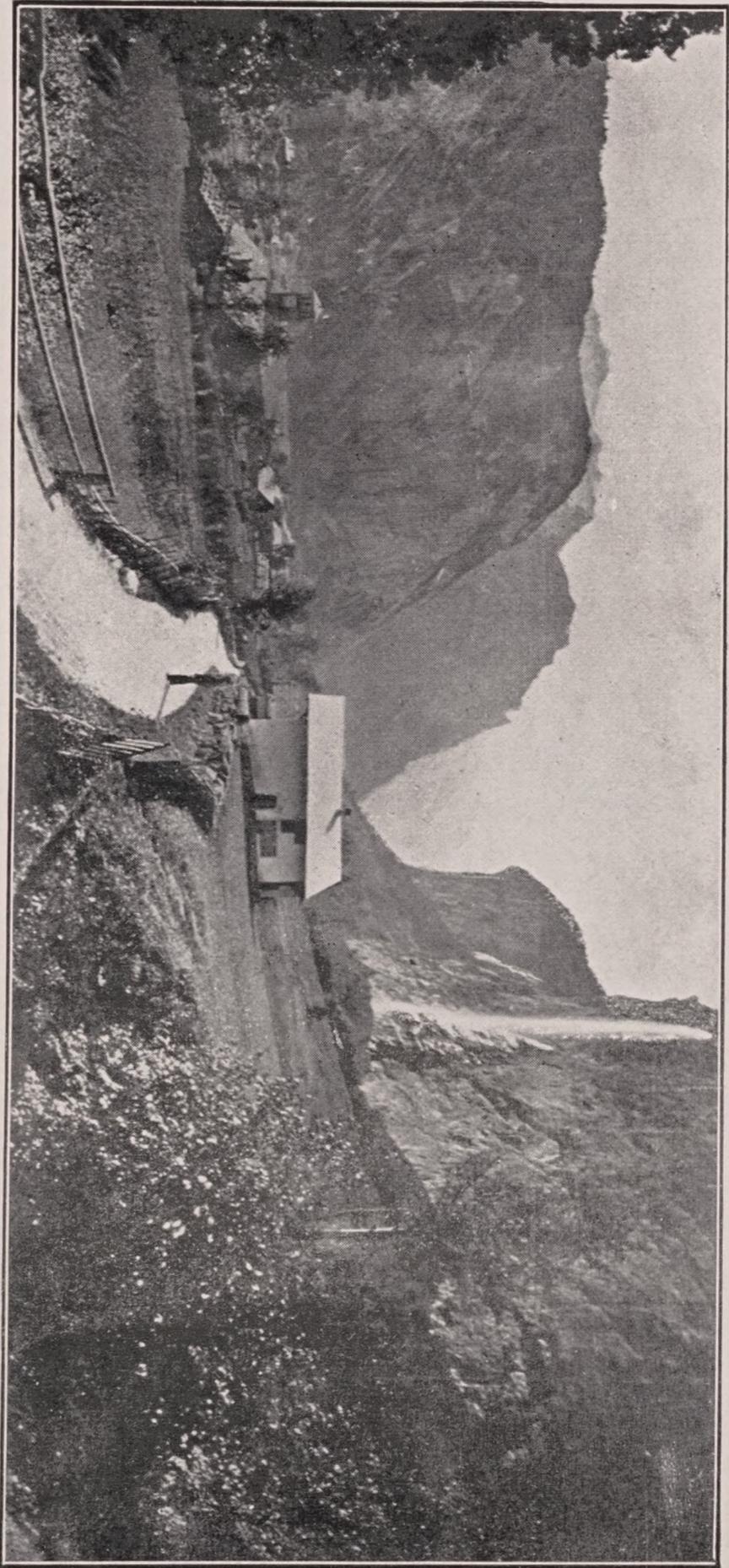
The next morning Dorris sat by the window which looked upon the river, sewing in hand. Her gaze rested upon Mount Piseo, with dun clouds about it, and compared it with the sun-kissed Motterone, which lifted its peak to a sky of brilliant blue, and wondering if at that moment Giacomo, Benedetto, or Marietta were looking upon it or thinking of her.

Seeing her happily employed, Dorothy threw a veil over her golden hair and went over to pass a little while with her grandmother. As she went by the dwelling of her Uncle Jacob, Marie, who was by the window, called to her, and then ran out, tying the strings of her bonnet as she walked along.

"That child Dorris is the most fortunate girl I know," she said. "Are you not delighted? Nicholas called last evening and told us all about it."

"What could he have told you?" asked Dorothy, anxiously. "I was just going to tell grandmother of my visit yesterday to Uncle Nicholas."

"Yes, of course, she should be the first to hear



From Dorris' Window.



the good news from you. I know her opinion already."

"Welcome, Dorothy!" exclaimed the old lady, graciously. "I was sure you would come to-day to talk over the good fortune of Dorris."

Dorothy dropped into a seat, her heart heavy with anxiety.

"Yes, I know that your heart is so full that you can scarcely believe your own happiness, much less speak of it. What a beautiful prospect for dear Dorris! How would Daniel rejoice to see his granddaughter mistress of that elegant home!"

"Grandmother," said Dorothy, trembling with excitement, "I hope Nicholas did not tell you that the matter was settled. Dorris has not said that she would go."

"What!" exclaimed Katharine, who had followed Marie; "are you in your senses, Dorothy?"

"I have no right to decide for Dorris," said Fräü Maurizius, tearfully.

"But, Dorothy," interposed Grandmother Durant, quietly, "Dorris is too young to decide such an important question—one that makes or mars her and your whole life. It is your duty to decide for her."

"Yes," added Marie, "if she has no better sense than to throw away her life's happiness, she should be made to take the advice of older people. If you do not insist upon her accepting this offer of Uncle

Nicholas, believe me the time will come when she will reproach you bitterly for not advising her for her and your real good."

"You will not live forever on the earth," interposed Katharine, "and when grandmother and Uncle Nicholas and all we older ones are gone, who will take care of Dorris? It is something for a girl who has neither father or brother to know that there will always be a full larder without any effort of her own."

"Dorris has never set her heart upon mere earthly possessions," returned Dorothy, timidly.

"That is exactly the trouble," exclaimed Katharine, decidedly; "she has always been so carefully provided for that she does not know what it is to want for anything, but if you were taken from her she would soon find out that it is hard for a girl to make her way in life. She has been brought up in a foreign country and kept away from her relatives, and now has no affection for them. We warned you when you married Maurizius that he would separate you from all your friends here."

"I never regretted for one moment going with him," said Dorothy, the tears running down her fair cheeks.

"Oh, well, there is no need to call up the past," interposed Grandmother Durant gently, "but we will say that your Uncle Nicholas is old, and may never again make the offer, and if you let this op-

portunity of a lifetime pass it will not be two years until you will both regret it, and you will reproach yourself that you did not advise her better."

"What is to become of her, Dorothy, when you are gone, that is what I would like to know?" questioned Marie. "Matthias and Jacob have enough to do to provide for their own children, and Dorris does not take to new people; she holds her head too high, so they do not trouble themselves about her."

"You should not say that of her," said the mother, tearfully; "she is a loving, dutiful daughter, and kind and polite to everybody."

"She is all that," commented the grandmother, "and will do as you advise even against her own wishes, so you should advise her for her own good. Let me have a talk with her, Dorothy; I can place the matter in its true light, and am sure she will be influenced for the right. If I did not have love for her and interest in her as my son Daniel's granddaughter I would not waste words upon her, for, as you know, I am not much given to speech."

Dorothy felt relieved that the responsibility would in a measure be lifted from her. She promised to send Dorris, and went home, her faithful and tender heart filled with conflicting emotions.

"Well, the great conference is over," said Dorris, laughingly, as she met her at the door; "now that affair is settled for all time."

“Oh, Dorris, if you would not treat such an important subject so lightly I would not feel so disheartened,” said her mother with trembling voice.

“But, dear mamma, you have no cause for anxiety. We are happy together; so happy that we wish no change.”

“Your grandmother is right; you do not realize the value of the opportunity you are letting slip from you. If you had heard her words—they were golden; and I fear with her that the time will come when you will bitterly regret your decision. When I am gone, and your Uncle Nicholas is gone, and your other relatives fail to interest themselves in your welfare, you will stand alone in the world—no father, no mother, no brother or sister. Oh, my heart aches when I think of it all.” And she wept without restraint.

“Mamma, dear, what have they said to distress you so?” cried Dorris, taking her mother in her strong young arms and kissing her tenderly. “Do not think about it one moment. I will go and have a talk with the whole set; they will not frighten me as they have frightened you. You will see that the clouds will pass by when I have had my say.”

“Yes, it would be better for you to go, dear; your grandmother does take kind interest in you, and it is no more than right that you should listen to her advice.”

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER VISIT TO UNCLE NICHOLAS.

When Dorris had anything to do it was done promptly. She went that very afternoon to see her grandmother and settle the matter then and there.

As she passed the dwelling of her Uncle Jacob she saw her Aunt Marie sitting as upright as an iron shaft at the window, but did not halt to converse.

“Welcome, Dorris,” exclaimed the old lady cordially, for Dorris looked so bright and cheerful that she was sure she had decided to accept the offer of her Uncle Nicholas. “Have you decided what day to leave your cottage for the elegant home at Ardez?”

“I do not intend to leave it for Ardez, grandmother. Mamma and I are happy where we are.”

“Your speaking so rashly proves that you need some one older and wiser to choose what is best for you.”

“Being young and inexperienced is something I cannot help, grandmother,” replied Dorris, respectfully, “but if I were ten years older and ten times

wiser I should never agree to sharing with Cousin Nicholas in the property of our uncle."

"You have always lived such a poor life, Dorris, that you do not know the happiness it is to have abundance and be free from poverty, which always brings care."

"Oh, grandmother, you are so mistaken in thinking we lived a poor life; no people on earth could live happier than we did on Mont Rosso."

"You were too young to know your needs. You were living from hand to mouth; your living had no solid foundation; it was only what your father could get from the sale of his pictures and the little your mother inherited from her parents. They had a poor life, but your mother willed it so when she left all her relatives and friends to marry an artist."

"I was not too young to know that mamma lived one of the happiest of lives. When papa lived we read and sang together and took lovely rambles over Mont Rosso, and under the shade of the trees we would boil the great mealy chestnuts to eat with our lunch of white rolls, sweet butter, and luscious grapes. Oh, grandmother, when I think of those happy times I cannot keep from shedding tears."

This result was not at all what the old lady had planned. To revive longings for the Italian home was not advancing the interests of the Durants, and she hastened to change the subject.

"These recollections of your childhood will give place to others more suitable for your years, dear Dorris," she said; "in the mean time I have a proposition to make to you. To-morrow afternoon your Uncle Jacob will take me to visit your Uncle Nicholas, who will be alone and lonely, for Nicholas will be at a cattle fair at Zernez. I wish you and your mother to go with us, and will take no denial. Handsome spans of horses and elegant carriages such as your Cousin Nicholas has are not at our command, but Jacob's plain carriage and one horse will answer for the time."

Dorris thanked her grandmother, glad to get away upon such easy terms, and, promising to be ready for the visit, hurried home.

"What is the result?" asked Dorothy, meeting her at the door and almost holding her breath in anxiety for the reply.

"A visit for us to Ardez to-morrow afternoon and for Cousin Nicholas to the fair at Zernez," laughed Dorris, gleefully.

Dorothy was rejoiced to see her cheerful, but her own heart was filled with unrest; she saw, if Dorris did not, that her grandmother had not given the affair up.

The next afternoon mother and daughter were ready, and the drive to Ardez was more enjoyed by Dorris than by the others of the party, they appearing to be communing with their own thoughts,

oblivious to the song of birds and the wild flowers by the wayside.

“You must take us over your uncle’s place this afternoon, Jacob,” suggested the grandmother as they came in sight of the mansion.

“I will; uncle may well be proud for one to see his herds and his stables, as handsome as many dwellings. Ah, well, money can accomplish anything.”

Uncle Nicholas was delighted to see them, and rung for Ursel to prepare coffee, and soon all were seated about a table abundantly supplied with the fine fruits and other products of the place.

“Brother,” said Grandmother Durant, “I have taken a notion to see all over this house to-day—the great dining-room with its glass-door china closets, the silverware and cut glass, the damask table linen, enough to last for generations. Then to the upper rooms to see the linen room with its piles upon piles of bed linen, the splendid blankets, and large, comfortable beds and the handsome carved furniture. We must go to the cellar, too, with its pillars and paved floor, and see the bountiful supplies which a provident householder keeps upon hand.”

“Yes, yes; Ursel has the keys; she will take you all over the house, and Jacob will take you over the barns and granaries and stalls. If I were not

so lame nothing would give me greater pleasure than to go with you."

"We will go first into the great dining-room," said Ursel with pride in showing unexpected guests the perfect neatness of the unused rooms, where not a speck of dust could be seen.

Dorothy was filled with admiration of the exquisite china, which, with most of the silver, was an heirloom in her late aunt's family; and Dorris, too, was interested in the antique beauty of the designs and embellishments. The lower rooms were all inspected and approved in a way that delighted Ursel, and would have charmed Nicholas had he been there to hear it. Then they went up the broad stairway.

"Where is Dorris?" asked Grandmother Durant, as they paused for breath at the head of the steps.

"She was with us until this moment," said Dorothy, looking down to the hall they had just left.

"Go down, Ursel, and see if she is sitting with her uncle," said the elder lady; "tell her we have not yet seen over the house and are waiting for her."

Ursel went, but came back with the information that Dorris was not anywhere to be seen.

"Do you search for her, Dorothy," said grandmother; "I will go down and talk to brother while you are gone."

It was not often that she was vexed, but this

time she was more; she was thoroughly displeased, and imparted her thoughts to her companions.

“We have done all we can to let Daniel’s granddaughter see the grand home that awaits her pleasure to accept,” said she. “Marie is right when she says once a foreigner always a foreigner. We cannot make an indolent, improvident Italian comprehend our prudent, sensible Swiss views of living. Brother Nicholas has honored her by giving her a chance to walk in the footsteps of her notable and revered foremothers, and I thought a look through this well-filled house would advance his interests with her; instead she has run off and left us to search for her.”

The old man said nothing, for at that moment Dorothy came in and took a seat by the window, looking out anxiously.

“I hope the child has met with no ill-luck,” she said, nervously.

“She will make her own ill-luck,” commented the old lady stiffly.

“Perhaps she has gone on the road to Zernez to meet Nicholas,” suggested Jacob. “She will be anxious to see the fine yoke of oxen he is bringing from the cattle market.”

“She cares for nothing useful; if it were a gay-winged butterfly she might run to get a look at it,” replied Grandmother Durant, with a side glance at the troubled face of Dorothy.

Silence reigned for quite awhile, which was broken by the door flying open. Dorris stepped in, her eyes bright with delight over the armful of wild roses, her merry laugh subsiding when she glanced around upon the clouded faces of her relatives.

Grandmother Durant glanced at Dorothy as if to say, "It is your place to speak," but the mother had no words.

"Now, is it not beautiful the way you have treated us, Dorris?" inquired the old lady. "Your relatives wished to give you pleasure, so invited you to pay a visit to our honored uncle. Instead of showing appreciation of the kindness you ran away, proving yourself ungrateful and ill-mannered. Particularly to your aged entertainer have you shown disrespect, for the young should revere the old; you have poorly recompensed one who has shown you more kindness than you deserve."

"You are not angry with me, are you, uncle?" said Dorris, going to him and clasping him about the neck. "I did not mean the least disrespect to you or to anybody. You told me that when I came again the wild roses on the ruins of Steinsberg would be in bloom and I could gather as many as I wished. I thought that the best time for me to go was when Ursel was showing grandma over the house. I did not think they would miss me or care that I went, and I ran there and back as quickly as

I could. I am more than sorry if you think me ungrateful, for I love you, you are so kind to me."

The heart of the old soldier melted like wax in the rays of the sun. "Yes, yes," he said; "that is exactly the case. I did invite you to come when the wild roses were in bloom; I forgot all about it, and should have thought that you had gone to gather them. We should not blame you, child; if all went wrong it was not your fault."

"It is now time to go home," said Grandmother Durant, stiffly. "One would think you were in your dotage, Brother Nicholas, to be so influenced by a word from a child."

Jacob, who had been wanting to go for some time, soon had the carriage at the door, and they drove away. The way home was passed in almost silence; even Jacob appeared to have lost his enthusiasm in regard to Nicholas and his oxen.

"I wish you to come over to see me to-morrow, Dorris; I have something to say to you," said grandmother, as Jacob helped her from the carriage at her own door.

"I will come in the afternoon, grandmother; you know I have a reading lesson of two hours in the mornings with Professor Strahl."

The old lady made no response, but nodding a curt good evening, walked up the steps of her house, and Jacob took Dorothy and her daughter to their cottage.

“Mamma,” said Dorris, as they sat together in the doorway that evening, “grandmother is changed toward me. She is not kind and affectionate to me as she was when we first came to Switzerland.”

“Yet she longs only for your happiness. I am glad, dear, that she is willing to give you advice, for I do not know what to say. I really do not know what is best for you. I feel miserably unsettled, but afraid to advise, fearing that I will reproach myself in after years.”

The next afternoon Dorris paid the promised visit, and found her grandmother sitting in stately solitude awaiting her arrival.

“I invited you to come, Dorris,” said she, pointing to a chair which stood near her, “because I have something important to say. In the affair which has been agitating us for the past two days you are entirely indifferent, or are thinking only of yourself. Thoughtless and trifling, you are willing to throw away the chance of a lifetime, against the advice of every one who has an interest in your welfare. To your mother should be your first duty; her welfare, her happiness, your first care. She is growing older, and has never been accustomed to work of any kind that will bring in a penny, nor have you. You have only the means to keep you in the most meagre way of living. If any misfortune or sickness should come your way you would be reduced to the extreme of poverty, if not starva-

tion. When you see the destitution of your mother you can say to yourself, 'I had it in my power to ward this distress from her, but I would not accept the opportunity.' You have the chance to provide a luxurious home for Dorothy, your mother, who at heart is good and noble, but who by her dependent nature is unfitted to battle with the world. She would sink under poverty as would a tender flower under a blighting frost. Now, I have had my say; think over my words, not in your careless, indifferent way, but as one who has no one to depend upon for the actual necessities of life."

Dorris sat perfectly still, her beautiful brown eyes fixed upon the face of her grandmother during the address. When it ended she would have spoken, but the old lady gave her a sign that the conference was over, and, obeying it, she arose and left the room.

As she passed down the corridor her Aunt Katharine intercepted her and invited her into her room.

"I suppose you can spare a moment to your aunts?" said she. "Marie is in here."

Dorris went in and took the seat offered.

"What we wish to say to you is that if you are so proud that you will not accept the offer of Uncle Nicholas, and your mother is so weak that she will not use her authority to command you to accept it, you need not expect that a relation you have will

offer you assistance in time of want. What will become of you should your mother be taken will be of not the least care to us."

"A useless creature belonging to no one and wanted by no one," added Marie; "believe me, there will be no sympathy or compassion for you, because you had a chance to be one of the most prosperous and honored property owners in the country and refused, and your poor, weak mother may well compare her lot with what it would have been had she been blessed by a more dutiful daughter."

"Can I go now?" said Dorris, trembling with emotion and very pale.

"If you have heard what we had to say."

"Yes, I have heard," and she opened the door and passed out.

When she reached home her heart throbbed with pity and grief to find her mother weeping bitterly.

"Mamma," said she, tenderly, "why do you grieve so over this; it is no misfortune as was the loss of dear papa?"

"That is my grief," said she, raising her tear-dimmed eyes to her daughter's face; "if papa was only here to advise all would be clear before us. My heart throbs with pride and joy when I think of your uncle wishing you to be mistress of that elegant home, with no fear of wanting for a comfort as long as you live; but it throbs with greater joy to think that if you do not accept his offer the

way may some time be opened for us to go back to our loved home on Mont Rosso. This you could never do if you accept his offer, for he gives it with the understanding that it is to be your home for life."

"Which it shall never be, mamma; rest assured of that."

"But again, I think that grandma may be right, and if I am called away you will be well provided for."

"God will provide for me, mamma, if I do my duty to the best of my knowledge and ability."

"But your relations will be all against you."

"They are against me now; even grandmother, who was once so kind; but I have never felt that I belonged to them, nor do I care to belong to them. They are very different from you, mamma; very, very different."

"Yes, dear; years of separation have shown me the difference, which I did not notice so much before I left them. Yet in their way they may be as near right as I in mine."

"It is only when I am alone with you, mamma, or reading to Dr. Strahl, and he explains the readings in the way papa explained them, that I feel really contented here. Oh, the happy days when papa was with us!" and the eyes of the much-tried Dorris overflowed with tears.

"It grieves me to tell you something that I must

tell you," said her mother, "but while you were out Dr. Strahl came in to tell me that he had received a letter from Berlin which makes it necessary for him to leave here earlier than he expected; he will be here but two days longer."

"Oh, mamma!" said Dorris, bitterly, "and only a few moments ago when I walked home from grandmother's I was thinking to myself how could I bear all this trouble with my relatives if it were not for my happy hours of reading and conversation with one who is so superior in knowledge, so like papa in goodness, kindness, and gentleness in imparting his knowledge to me. And now he is going, and one day will pass like another—nothing to do in which I take interest, nothing to think of but the coldness of my relatives; the whole world empty save for you."

She went to her room and sat down by her window, that the air might cool her fevered cheek. She had looked forward with regret to the time when Professor Strahl must return to his duties in the college, for he had assisted her in her studies since the second week of his residence in the cottage, the lady teacher having left Schuls.

The Professor from his window over the porch had heard Dorothy and her daughter conversing in the soft language of Italy, and being anxious to perfect himself in it, had asked as a great favor that Dorris should read to him from her father's

books, and he in turn gave her two hours' instruction in studies she desired, especially Latin.

And now this must all cease; he was going away, and as her gaze rested upon the dark slope of Mont Pisoc, over which gray clouds were passing, the words of an old song came to her mind:

“The old time joy, the old time joy,
Has gone like a dream.”

CHAPTER IX.

A TALK WITH MELCHIOR.

Two days passed, and Professor Strahl had bidden them good-bye and set out for Berlin; and by the window looking toward Mont Piseo sat Dorothy and Dorris with needlework in their hands, but their thoughts were not upon it.

The dutiful, affectionate heart of Dorris was wrung at seeing the change in her mother's face since the offer of her Uncle Nicholas and the severe words of her relatives had given her so much anxiety. Dorris knew that the struggle in that loving heart was almost more than could be borne, and was glad that the time for settling the matter was almost at hand.

"Mamma," she said, "did not Uncle Nicholas say that he would send Cousin Nicholas this afternoon for our answer?"

"Yes; and oh, Dorris, do not decide too hastily; you may make the mistake of a lifetime."

"We have not seen Melchior for some time, mamma; he is gardening at the Sanitarium. I think I will take a walk there and see him."

"Do, dear; the walk over the mountain will refresh you."

Dorris laid her sewing upon the broad sill of the window, put on her sun hat, kissed her mother good-bye, and walking quickly down the path to the bridge, she crossed it without halting to gaze at the water gurgling its way beneath it, went quickly up the slope of Mont Piseo, and was soon entering the large grounds of the Sanitarium.

She looked about, but did not see Melchior, and her heart was beginning to chill with disappointment when she heard voices behind a large flowering bush and recognized one of them as that of Melchior.

“Now, Dorris, have you come to see your old friend?” he said, pleasantly, as he halted in his work of spading and held out his hand to her.

“Yes, Melchior; I have wanted to see you,” she said.

He was not alone; near him stood a girl talking volubly and scarcely waiting for his slow responses. She wore a nurse’s costume, and under the shade of a tree near by stood a child’s carriage. Dorris went toward it that she might not appear to be a listener to the conversation, and saw a pale little boy, who was leaning forward to catch the conversation, and Dorris was surprised to find him an intelligent listener instead of the infant she had thought him. He put up a white, thin hand to enjoin silence. “I wish to hear what they are saying,” he said.

“No, Herr gardener,” remarked Lorette, glibly,

“no reasonable creature should expect a learned lady like his mother to waste her time entertaining a cripple. No one would do it unless well paid for it.”

“But she is his mother,” commented Melchior, “and although it could not be expected of her to wheel his carriage for hours, yet—”

“But she is better employed,” interrupted Lorette; “she understands all kinds of science, such as learned men even have no greater knowledge, so people say, and gives all her time to it; and the doctors say her brain must have rest, and that is why she is here. Her husband, in the mean time, is traveling with their two elder boys; bright, healthy, handsome boys they are, not at all like this cripple, who, the doctors say, must live out in the air. What good does it do? He is a cripple, and will always be one; and his mother is glad to have him out of her sight.”

“It is well she has such a kind care-taker,” remarked Melchior, dryly.

The nurse knew by his look and tone that he was rebuking her, but before she could reply the boy said, excitedly: “She is not kind; she is ill-tempered, and I hate her.”

“You see the thanks I get,” said Lorette, flushing with anger; “the miserable little cripple, I—”

Dorris took the carriage beyond hearing and stooped and kissed his forehead.

"I knew it all the time," said the boy, with tears running down his cheeks; "Carl and Max belong to papa, but I belong to nobody."

"Poor child!" said Dorris, tenderly.

"I wish you would stay with me; wheel my carriage away and let Lorette have to run about to find me."

But Lorette, her chat finished, came toward them, and, with a show of kindness, said, "So, Willie, you have found a friend," and, nodding to Dorris, drew the carriage away.

"Who are they, Melchior?" inquired Dorris, after watching them until they disappeared from view.

"I know no more of them than what you heard just now. I only know that the lady is in the Sanitarium for her health, and that every day the nurse wheels the carriage of the little boy for hours through the grounds. She only speaks to me when there is no one else to talk to."

"The poor boy; he must have a singular mother."

"Yes, I have thought that; and there is something else that I think singular, Dorris," noting her pale cheeks and sad eyes. "Why do you sit in the cellar dungeon, knowing that outside and overhead the sun is shining clear and warm to bring joy into one's heart?"

Dorris remembered this comparison. Melchior had made it the day before her first communion—

the day he brought her the sweet violets, which she had always kept in remembrance of that happy time in her life.

“Oh, Melchior,” said she, with tear-dimmed eyes, “if one only knew that the sun was really shining outside to bring warmth and joy into one’s heart; but even if it were, and the one in the cellar dungeon has no ladder whereby to ascend, she must remain there.”

“If one cannot come of her own strength, she must remember that there is a compassionate Helper, an arm strong to deliver, if she will only reach out her hand to him.”

These words brought to her remembrance those uttered by her father during his last days upon earth, and also the hymn taught her by Fräulein von Ernstein:

“Take my hand, oh Father dear,
Let me know thee ever near.”

“Yes, if one could go to her Father in heaven for help in a trouble like mine,” she said to herself.

Dorris had never prayed for this; her night and morning petitions were those she had been taught in childhood, and she was faithful in the performance of this duty.

But now, like a flash of light, the significance of

the lines of the hymn came into her mind—a prayer to be led by a strong Hand, a longing to lay the burden of her anxiety and distress upon one who was able and willing to guide and comfort her. Oh, the joy if she could be led as a child; to be as free from care as she was before the offer of Uncle Nicholas; as she was when she and her father sat amid the flowers on Mont Rosso, and she read and sang to him while he painted the distant mountains and Lake Maggiore at their feet.

“You have considered long over my words,” remarked Melchior, his kind heart noting the change in her since he last saw her, then so cheerful and happy, now so burdened with care. “Do you realize what a great privilege the compassionate Helper has allowed us in giving us the joy of saying *Our* Father who art in heaven? Do you know what a father is and what a help a father can be?”

“Oh, who can know better than I what a loving father is?” cried Dorris, with tears streaming from her eyes. “If my father were but living I would indeed know where to go for advice and help; no one then would tell me that I am a useless creature and in after years my mother would reproach me for bringing her to poverty,” and she sobbed in the abandonment of grief.

Melchior knew that tears would relieve her burdened heart; he said nothing to check them, but kept on with his work, clipping here and there

stray shoots and branches, until she regained her composure.

“One who knows so well as do you what it is to have a loving father should be the happiest of persons, for you can comprehend what it is to have a Father in heaven who will never leave nor forsake you if you are his child.”

“Yes, Melchior, but I do not know that he heeds me and my troubles. Our Father in heaven belongs to every one upon earth; all are his children.”

“Suppose you displeased your earthly father; suppose you were not always willing for him to guide and direct you?”

“Oh, Melchior, my father loved me so that he made of me what he would; I was under his teaching and example all the time.”

“I judged he was just such a father, and knowing him as you do you can the better understand what it is to have not only a powerful helper and protector but loving friend in our Heavenly Father, who wishes us all to be happy.”

“My father’s greatest wish was to see me happy,” said Dorris.

“But now suppose you sometimes wished to be your own mistress, and you wandered away from your earthly father’s oversight, following your own leading; then, after a time of trusting to yourself and forgetting your father’s guiding hand, you

came into great need for the best advice, and there was no one to help you, and you looked back upon the love of that kind father who always could and did help you; would you not say to yourself: 'Yes, I have a father who loves me and will help me; I will go to him.'"

"Yes, I understand you, Melchior, but if I have not depended for guidance upon my Heavenly Father, but have trusted to myself, dare I ask his help now?"

"You, who had a loving father on earth, should be the one to know."

"Oh, he would have welcomed me!" cried Dorris, tearfully. "All the past would have been forgotten in his joy that I had come back to him."

"Our Father in heaven is far more tender and loving than any earthly father can possibly be. Believe in his written word, Dorris; it was written for you. Come out of the cellar dungeon, poor child; come into the sunlight of God's love; be a loving, trusting child; let him take you by the hand and lead you."

"Dorris made no reply for a time; she was reflecting as she followed the old man from bush to bush, as the spading demanded.

"Melchior," said she, "I wish to ask you a question; will you answer it?"

"Yes, if I can, I surely will."

"If one knows that she has a loving Father in

heaven, dare she ask a question of him that she would ask her earthly father?"

"Surely she could, Dorris; and more than that, the answer, while it might not suit your wishes at the time, would be what is best for you, for he knows the end from the beginning. Your earthly father, not knowing what is best, might grant the wish, and time would prove that it was far from wise. Therefore, in your prayers to your Heavenly Father, end no petition without the words, 'Not my will but thine be done.'"

"But if one longs to do what is right, that she may not have remorse in after years, but does not know what is right, can she pray to God to show her the way? Can she get an answer that will show her the sure and certain way?"

"When we ask God in faith, believing that he hears us and will answer in his own good time and way, we are sure of an answer, and must wait patiently for it."

"But, Melchior, if we cannot wait, but must have an answer this very day, in a few hours?"

"I cannot quite understand you; if I knew what is troubling you I might be better able to advise," replied the old man, kindly.

"Yes, Melchior, how can you advise when you have not been told. There is a young man who asks me to be his wife. He does not care for me nor I for him. I am always glad when I think I

will never see him again. All my relatives except my mother urge me to marry him, because I would then share with him in our great-uncle's property. They say that I have it in my power to provide an elegant home for my widowed mother, and if I refuse I will suffer bitter remorse when I see her need comforts which I could have given her and would not. They reproach me bitterly, and say that a girl of seventeen should take the advice of older and wiser people, and that I am and always will be a useless creature."

"Would it not be better to tell the young man your feeling toward him?" asked Melchior.

"Mamma did tell him, but he paid no attention to it."

"God sees into your heart, Dorris. He knows all and more than you can tell him. He is a God of love. Can you promise in his sight to love a man you cannot love? Is not the answer to be found in your own heart?"

"It is, Melchior, it is!" cried Dorris with tears of joy. "I am trusting my Father in heaven, and he is leading me; I need have no remorse for lack of duty to my mother."

"Yes, Dorris, put yourself entirely under the guidance of your Heavenly Father, and be joyful in the certainty that you have the Almighty One for a friend."

"I know it! I know it! Oh, the peace and con-

fidence and strength that has come into my heart! You are the friend who has brought me the message from my Heavenly Father. I thank you many, many times. Now I must go; come soon and see us, Melchior."

Dorothy met her at the door upon her return, and her heart thrilled with joy to see the change in her. The eyes of Dorris were bright, her cheeks had regained their rosy hue, and her voice its cheerful ring.

"I have been to see Melchior," she said, "and he has shown me the direct path to my Father in heaven."

Then the two went to their favorite window, and, taking seats, Dorris told her mother of the whole interview with Melchior, and Dorothy rejoiced with her that peace had dawned again in her heart.

Uncle Nicholas that evening received the negative answer to his request, and as the days passed on Dorothy, to her great joy, saw that the improvement in the spirits of Dorris was lasting. She laughed and chatted and sang as before, took interest in all that pertained to their daily life, enjoyed the church service and Sabbath school, and the scenery about her home grew more attractive, though it could never displace the love for Mont Rosso from her heart.

Autumn had come, and one afternoon Marie and

Melchior met, both on their way to the cottage by the river.

“Are you intending to call at Dorothy’s?” asked Marie, halting to speak to him.

“I am,” replied Melchior.

“I supposed so, as you are the friend who poses as an adviser, the prophet which has foreseen evil, the sun which has given light to two moles. Through you they have turned their backs upon an offer which everybody who has a spark of real interest in them knows they should have grasped with both hands. What Cousin Nicholas sees in her is more than any sensible person can tell, for he could get a much better wife for the asking. She is perfectly useless, and knows no more of the duties of the mistress of such a home that Uncle Nicholas offers than a canary bird.”

“Your husband is an experienced farmer, I believe,” remarked Melchior in his quiet way; “how would it answer for him to yoke a canary bird with one of his oxen to draw a cart?”

“One side of your comparison hits the mark; Dorris is just as useless as a canary bird. She can sing and run after wild roses; that is all that we have been encouraged to expect from her.”

“It is to get this little bird to cheer one with her sweet song that brought me here to-day,” explained Melchior, as they reached the doorway of the cottage.

Marie had a message for Dorothy from the grandmother, and took her aside to give it, leaving Dorris to entertain Melchior.

“Dorris,” said the old man, “there is a gentleman at the Sanitarium by the name of von Ernstein; do you know of one of that name?”

“I do indeed,” and Dorris told of her meeting with him and his daughter, and of the painting of the strand of the North Sea which they had given to her mother.

“Through a letter from Professor Strahl he has heard that you are here,” continued Melchior, “and being too feeble to come to see you, will consider it a great favor if you will come to see him.”

“Gladly,” replied Dorris, cheerfully; “I will go this afternoon if it will suit him to see me.”

Melchior was sure it would suit, and waited to accompany her, and in a short time they reached the Sanitarium, where Herr von Ernstein sat upon the broad veranda.

He looked up in surprise when she told him who she was—a tall, finely-developed young lady, with a wealth of brown hair, instead of the little girl whom his daughter had loved.

They conversed long and earnestly, and Dorris noticed a look of pain pass over the face of the bereaved father at the mention of Amälie. She knew the comfort it was to her mother and herself to talk

of her father, and she longed for him to have the same comfort.

“It grieves me to see that you avoid speaking of your loved daughter, now happy in heaven,” she said.

“My child,” he replied in a trembling voice, “you are dear to me for my daughter’s sake, and for that reason I say to you what I have never said to any one. It is not the separation from my loved daughter that has burdened my heart all these years; it is the cruelty with which I treated her during the last few weeks of her life.”

“Cruelty! Oh, that is impossible!” cried Dorris, clasping her hands in astonishment. “You idolized her; she told me so.”

“Yes, dear child; but let me tell you. I would never listen to a word of her leaving me. In my selfish distress at the thought of losing her, I would not give her the comfort of talking to me. I realized afterward that she longed to tell me her thoughts, her wishes, perhaps her fears, which I should have listened to and comforted. She saw I could not bear it, so kept it all in her own heart. The poor, dear young creature had no mother to lean upon—no one but a sorrow-stricken man, who leaned for comfort upon her feeble life. I longed for her to get well, and thought the surest way was to keep her cheerful. She had to bear her sad thoughts alone, and who can tell how sad they

may have been? The night she was called home she said, "Come, papa, come; do not leave me," and even put out a feeble, detaining hand. But I must have help; I ran to the room of the physician in the hotel of Pallanza. He was hard to wake; when I got back she was dead. Alone, entirely alone, had my sweet, timid child gone out upon her long voyage; fought the battle with death alone, forsaken."

"No, Herr von Ernstein, she was not alone; her Saviour was with her; there is no comforter like him," said Dorris, with tears of sympathy in her eyes. "I remember every word she said to me the day I went for the picture," and Dorris repeated each word of the conversation between them while Herr von Ernstein had gone from the room.

"Oh, child, you can never know the comfort you have given me. Think well of every word my daughter said to you that you may tell me exactly as she said it."

Dorris had no need to think; she had recalled the words too often to forget them, and now repeated them to the father, who listened eagerly.

"This does comfort, does comfort," he said when she finished the conversation between Fräulein von Ernstein and herself by the low stone wall. "For years I have thought the poor child sought comfort of me; instead, she was only wishing to share with me the peace that filled her own heart."

It appeared that he could not rejoice enough over the words that he had never expected to hear. It was to him as a message from the happy home where his loved one was singing the songs of the redeemed.

“I leave here to-morrow for my home in Berlin,” he said, as Dorris arose to go; “I thank you, Fräulein Dorris—thank you from my heart of hearts for the blessed comfort you have given. Life will be sweeter to me for it.”

At that moment Lorette came out on the veranda with Willie in his carriage, and nodded to Dorris as to an old acquaintance.

“Mamma wants to see you,” cried Willie, eagerly. “She was going to send for you to come to see her. Come now, come now,” and Willie held fast to her hand, not letting it go until Dorris promised to go with him to see his mother.

CHAPTER X.

MANY PLEASANT SURPRISES.

Dorris found Fräü von Lichtenstern in her private parlor, seated before a writing table, upon which were books, manuscripts, and writing materials in profusion, and could only raise her eyes long enough to wave her visitor to a chair and resume her work.

“Come here to me,” said Willie, beckoning eagerly, a glad light in his eyes; “why have you staid away so long?”

“Willie,” exclaimed his mother, harshly, “you should not be so free with a stranger.”

“She is not a stranger; she knows me, and likes me, and I like her.”

“Have you ever been employed as a governess?” inquired the lady, turning to her.

“No, I have never been employed in any capacity; I live at home with my mother.”

“I have just returned from Germany, and in a few days business will call me there again. My time is so filled with scientific subjects that I cannot pay attention to the education of a sickly child. The physicians say that Willie must go to a warmer climate, and I must find some one to not only give him a little instruction, but have sole charge of him, for which she would be paid liberally; but the

condition is that she must go with him to Italy, to remain, perhaps, for years."

"I know the very place," said Dorris, a sudden hope springing up in her heart; "it is on Mont Rosso, by Lake Maggiore, my dear, dear home. I was born in Italy, and always lived there until the past year."

"You have a cheerful temperament; the very thing the physician says the boy needs in a caretaker," said the lady, noticing the eager flush that rose to the cheeks of Dorris. "Why not accept the position and let us make the agreement now; in which case I will give you the first quarter's salary in advance?"

"I must consult with my mother. I never do anything without her consent."

"Then let me know at your earliest convenience," said the lady, returning to her writing, as Dorris arose to go.

"I am almost sure I can go, and will come and tell you in a few hours at latest."

"Do come," said Willie from his carriage.

She nodded a cheerful response and hurried away, and sped lightly over the mountain path to her home. She did not notice the gray clouds that hovered over the mountains nor feel the cold wind. Before her mind's eyes she saw the sunny slope of Mont Rosso, saw the roses upon the terrace of her home, heard the song of birds and the gurgling of

the mountain stream. "But mamma! What will she say to this sudden change?" she thought, and with this in mind she reached her own door.

Dorothy sat by the window sewing, and looked up in astonishment at hearing the sprightly step and seeing the sparkling eyes of Dorris. "What is it, child? What is it?" she asked, eagerly.

"Oh, mamma, we can go home, back to our loved Cavandone; we can go before the cold winter sets in; I have found employment."

"Dorris, tell me all!" said the mother, pale with the sudden news; and in as few words as possible the subject was made plain to her, and then the daughter waited for response.

"Oh, Dorris," said Dorothy in a voice trembling with joy, "I have never complained nor let you know that I grieved for my Italian home, but all is so changed here since I left it that I have never felt contented, and since that affair with Uncle Nicholas, and because of it the coldness of my relatives, I have wished a hundred times that we had never left our cottage home, and to go back would be the greatest pleasure in life to me."

"We can go, mamma; dear, patient little manma," bending down to kiss her forehead; "we can go; I only waited, fearing that you would not be willing to go."

"But did Fräü Lichtenstern speak particularly of Cavandone?"

"She said anywhere so it was in Italy, where the climate was milder than here, and when I spoke of my old home she seemed more pleased than ever."

"But, dear Dorris, we only rented that house; of course, it is occupied now."

"I will brave all the lions that cross my path, mamma, now that I know that you are willing to go. We can rent a house in Cavandone until that one is vacant. Leave all that to me, mamma."

"I will, gladly," was the response; "I dread responsibility, and know that in your hands all will be right."

"Then I will go back and tell Fräu Lichtenstern, and that matter will be off my mind."

"You will be so tired, dear; you had better wait until evening."

"No, business is business; besides, I promised," and Dorris left and went quickly along the mountain path, her heart filled with happiness over the charming prospect before her.

When she reached the Sanitarium Fräu Lichtenstern was at dinner, but she left the table and went to the reception room to see Dorris, eager to hear the report, and was delighted to find that all was satisfactory. It added to her satisfaction to hear that the mother was to go with Dorris and aid in the care of Willie, for all responsibility would be removed from her by it; no one could reflect upon her neglect of duty, she reasoned, now that a ma-

tron older and more experienced than herself was provided. She made the quarterly compensation so liberal that ample support for the three was secure, and means left for any luxuries that Willie's condition might require.

"Now," said she, as she put the money into the hand of Dorris, "this part being settled, we must decide upon the time. What do you say to going in four days?"

The heart of Dorris throbbed with surprise at the question. Could they get ready in such a short time? What would her mother say to this sudden change? But Dorris had put her hand to the plough; she would not turn back.

"I must see Willie off upon his journey before I leave for Germany," added Fräü Lichtenstern, noticing her hesitation; "it will be growing colder all the time now, and, besides, I must return to Germany as early as possible."

"We will be ready at that time," said Dorris, rapidly planning ways and means to fulfil her promise.

"I am glad; I shall live in constant dread of something happening to delay such a charming arrangement; Willie might fall ill and not be able to go for a time; then winter will set in and the mountain passes be choked with snow, and we shut up in this lonely valley for months."

"I hope nothing will happen," said Dorris,

brightly, as she arose to go, after giving a cheering glance to Willie, who was being wheeled up and down the corridor by one of the servants.

One of the plans of Dorris was to see Melchior and arrange with him to come the next day and help pack the household goods and see to having them shipped for Cavandone. Fortune favored her; he was working in the grounds as she passed out, and readily promised to come. He was much surprised at the sudden call to return to the Italian home, and sorry that he should see them no more; but it was God's will that they should go; that was sufficient for Melchior.

Dorothy was more than surprised; she was astounded to hear that they were expected to start upon their journey on the morning of the fourth day.

"It is impossible, Dorris; simply impossible!" she ejaculated. "Just think of it! Our goods to be packed and shipped; and this house, what are we to do with it? How can you for a moment think of going in such a short time?"

"It can and will be done, little mother; I have thought it all out. Three days will be as good as three weeks, and better, if we make good use of them. Melchior is to come to-morrow and pack and ship the furniture, and we will put the house in his hands to rent or sell; he can do far better with it than we can or any one else that I know."

“But grandmother and the uncles and aunts?” exclaimed Dorothy, turning pale at the thought of their angry astonishment.

“And Cousin Nicholas; don’t forget him,” laughed Dorris, gleefully. “I can imagine his open-mouthed look of surprise.”

Dorothy joined in her mirth; it cheered her and did her good to see Dorris in such spirits.

“Let us have a good cup of tea, *liebe mütterchen*, and we can utilize the time by talking at the table. While you are preparing it I will write to Maja and tell her we are coming. Oh, mamma, it does really seem too good to be true, to think we will see them all again, and the dear pastor and his wife and other dear friends.”

By the time the letter was ready to mail, Dorris, whose watching eyes were rewarded by seeing a boy trudging along toward Schuls, gave it into his care to post; then they sat down to the neat little meal and ate and chatted while Dorris rested.

They sat long at table, for Dorris knew that her mother’s nerves needed quiet after the exciting news of the morning, and nothing would be gained by attempting anything that day toward forwarding the moving.

“We will be as idle as we please for the balance of the day, mamma,” she remarked, cheerily.

“But first should we not go over and tell grandmother and the relations?” asked Dorothy, anx-

iously. "I really do not know how to commence it when I see them."

"Then do not try, mamma; I will make the confession for you, and all in good time. Just think of the happy life we are to have in our dear old home. With the means that Fräu Lichtenstern gives us we can not only afford every comfort for Willie and ourselves, but can have sails upon the lake and take him to Pallanza and other places," and in listening to these prospective pleasures Dorothy forgot the relations and their certain displeasure.

"Mamma," said Dorris, after a pause, "is it not strange that Fräu Lichtenstern gave me no directions as to the care of Willie? I put the question to her, and she said that she knew nothing about it; that I could use my judgment; that she would be satisfied with my management. She added that she was more interested in political agitations of Europe than in the care of children. Can you understand, mamma, how a mother can neglect a sick child for any other interest?"

"I do not know that we could really call it neglect, when she is willing to pay so lavishly to have him cared for by persons whom she thinks more competent than herself. But I cannot understand her willingness to be away from him. My husband and my child were my all; I could do without any

other society. I cannot enter into the feelings of one who thinks differently.”

“I do rejoice, mamma, that you love children and understand so well how to manage them and to win their love. You will pity and love Willie as I do when you see him. He is gentle as an infant when treated kindly; it was the cruel words of Lorette which roused such a tempest of anger in him.”

“Kindness is the most potent factor in the training of children, and love is the root of kindness,” said Fräu Maurizius.

“Just think what a well-bred child you made out of the little savage Marietta,” laughed Dorris. “I think it must be the greatest joy that a mother can have to know that she has done the best that was possible for her children by example and precept. How can she do this unless she be good and just and right in every way? How can children grow up good and useful men and women when left to the care of ignorant servants?”

“It had been the aim of Dorris to keep her mother’s mind from the ordeal of telling the relatives of their intended change of abode, and she succeeded. The subject was, in the opinion of Dorothy, when given time to recur to it, like a mountain almost impossible to scale, but which must be scaled.

At the suggestion of Dorris, they retired early

that evening, and when sure her mother was asleep she descended to the rooms below and worked diligently for several hours. She had helped to arrange the household effects for safe transportation from Cavandone to Schuls; now this knowledge was available in packing to send them from Schuls to Cavandone. She knew what barrels and boxes held the pictures, books, glass, and china to the best advantage, and knowing this, the work was quietly and speedily done.

Everything on that floor which would not be really needed for the little time they remained was ready for removal; then Dorris went to her well-earned rest, weary but happy.

The surprise of Dorothy was complete when she arose the next morning. All thoughts of not being ready at the appointed time were banished when she saw what had been accomplished in a few hours.

“We will go and see grandmother now, and have it over with,” said Dorris when they finished breakfast; “by the time we have paid our calls Melchior will be here.”

They put all in order and set out, Dorris talking all the way that her mother’s mind might be kept as much as possible from the dreaded interview.

They reached the grandmother’s door unseen by Marie, gave a tap upon it, and entered.

“We have come to give you a surprise, grand-

mother," said Dorris, cheerily, as they took the seats she offered. "I have unexpectedly received employment, and am going to try to be of some use in the world. Mamma is, of course, going with me; we could not live away from each other, and we are busy getting ready for the journey, so you will excuse a short call."

Grandmother Durant heard her in silence to the end, and then said slowly: "Where no advice is asked none need be given. It would have been more respectful to have informed your relations of your intentions that something might be done with the house, which neither of you will appreciate until you are beggars. Go, Dorris, down to Jacob's house and tell your Aunt Marie to come and tell your Aunt Katharine that I wish to see her."

"I do not think we need their help," began Dorris, but catching an anxious glance from her mother, she went out and soon returned with her aunts.

"We were sent for, grandmother," remarked Katharine, stiffly; "for what purpose we are waiting to hear."

"Tell her, Dorris," said the grandmother; "it appears to be entirely your affair; your mother does not speak, and I have no right to have a say in it."

Dorris made short work of the explanation, and there was silence for a full minute.

"I have said all along that once a foreigner always a foreigner," said Marie. "Let her go back to her onions and macaroni, and Dorothy with her; she is nothing but a reed in her daughter's hands."

"I will only say," remarked Katharine, "that the relatives upon whom you turn your backs because they have no high heads among them will not turn their faces toward you when your pride brings you down to the poverty you richly deserve."

"We will go now, mamma," said Dorris, rising and taking the hand of her mother, who sat pale and trembling. "Good-bye, dear grandmother," kissing her upon her forehead; "good-bye, aunts!" and she led the way to the door, Dorothy following in her footsteps with the exactness that she had done in her farewells.

The moment they were outside Dorothy burst into tears, and Dorris did not attempt to check them; she knew that it would relieve her far more than words of hers could do.

"Let us cross the bridge, mamma," said she, cheerily, when they reached it; "I wish to see the place where the wild roses grow; we will take a root from them to our new home."

Dorothy was cheered by the care-free tone; moreover, the dreaded interview was past; there was nothing now to mar their pleasure in thinking of the change they were about to make.

"I almost imagine that I can see Dr. Strahl

walking with his brisk step along this path," said Dorris as they ascended the slope of Mont Piseo. "I wonder if we will ever see him again?"

"No, I think not; there is a possibility of his coming to Schuls and the Sanitarium next summer, but we will not be here to see him."

With a sharp stick and the exertion of some of her surplus strength, Dorris succeeded in securing a strong, healthy root of the wild rose, and wrapped it in some moist earth and put both in her handkerchief, then put them in her mother's hand.

"Take them home for me, mamma, please; I have another call to make; I am going to Ardez."

"Oh, Dorris!" exclaimed Dorothy, in utter surprise, stopping to gaze into her daughter's face. "You surely do not mean it?"

"Yes, mamma; and would like you to go with me, if you will. Melchior will wait patiently if he gets to the cottage before we return."

"It is not that, but I never could face Uncle Nicholas after what has passed. If our relations here are so angry and upbraided us so severely, what will he say?"

"It does not matter to me what he says; that is his side of the question. Mine is that he has been kinder to me than any one here except Melchior, and I would be ungrateful not to go to see him before I leave."

“Yes, Dorris, but Cousin Nicholas; what can you say to him?”

“Nothing!” laughed Dorris; “he has gone to the wedding of a comrade in Berne, and is not expected back for two days. I heard Aunt Katharine tell grandmother this just as we came out the door.”

“Then go, dear, and do not hurry; Melchior and I can do all there is to do; the advantage in having a small house is that we have not much to move.”

Dorris kissed her hand to her mother and sped along the mountain path, while Dorothy took the way home by the bridge. The surprise of Uncle Nicholas was only surpassed by his delight over the unexpected call, and he invited Dorris to a seat near him.

“Have you changed your mind about Nicholas and come to tell us?” he asked, eagerly; “if so we will have the grandest wedding festivities that have ever been known in the valley.”

“No, uncle; I came to tell you that I have found employment; I am to have the care of a crippled boy, whose physicians say must be taken to a warm climate; so mamma and I will take him to our old home in Cavandone. I felt that I must come to say good-bye to you, for you have been so kind to me, and I say in all sincerity that I am sorry to leave you.”

The old man said nothing for what seemed to Dorris a long time.

"When do you go?" he asked.

"Day after to-morrow in the morning. Melchior is to come to-day to help us, and will send our furniture on its way to Italy this evening."

"You cannot have better help; Melchior is always a friend in need."

"No one knows that better than myself, uncle," said Dorris. Then, as her sensitive conscience reminded her that the advice of the old man had helped blight the hopes of her Uncle Nicholas, tears filled her eyes, and she looked at him with a sad, loving glance.

"We have put our cottage in his hands, uncle," she continued. "We knew that he can do better for us than we could do for ourselves in renting or selling it."

"Yes," commented the old man, reflectively.

"Good-bye, uncle," said Dorris, rising to go; "and with my good-bye I wish to ask you to come to see us in our Italian home. I would love to see you sitting upon our dearly loved terrace and eating the great bunches of purple grapes that you need not rise from your chair to gather."

"I would love to come, dear; but it would have been the joy of my old heart to have had you here. You would have brought brightness and cheer into this quiet home. But it was not to be. God bless thee, dear, and give thee his peace!"

"I am so glad you do not feel offended with me, and that I can look back upon my visit here as one of the pleasantest of my life. Remember me to Cousin Nicholas, and give him this as a little memento of me," and she laid a netted purse of green and crimson silk upon the table, shook hands again with the old man, and left the room.

"Dorris!" he called; "Dorris, come back; I have something to say!"

Dorris returned immediately and stood beside him.

"Tell Dorothy I want her to come to-day to bid me good-bye; tell her I will take no denial."

"She will come, uncle; I am sure she will," and Dorris tripped away.

This request was a new trial to Dorothy. Her heart would have failed her entirely had she not been encouraged by Dorris.

"He was so kind and good, mamma, and did not feel the least aggrieved that we were going away. You would regret it after we left here; besides, I promised."

"I will go, dear, and wish now that I had gone with you."

"But Melchior would have been waiting so long; now you need not hurry; so much is already done that Melchior and I will have them ready to send off earlier than we expected."

"I am sorry I had to send for you to come to bid your old uncle good-bye, Dorothy," said the old

man as she entered the stately home in Ardez, "but I know your reason for not being willing to come. You need have no fears; I have no intention of speaking upon the subject of my disappointment, so take a seat and listen to what I have to say."

Dorothy took the seat near him, which had been occupied by Dorris, and waited developments.

"Your daughter, when here, gave me an invitation to visit her at your home in Cavandone. I do not care to promise to visit any one who lives in a rented house, for the reason that by the time I reached there they may have gone elsewhere and strangers be in the house. When I come to see you I want to know where to find you. You know who my heir will be; he has enough without the addition of what he will inherit from me, but I intend leaving him, as my namesake, the bulk of what I possess. Were he not such a clod that daughter of yours would have been my heir; she should have inherited all had she become the wife of Nicholas. As it is, I am determined that she shall have something. She loves that home in Italy, and she shall have it if it can be bought. I sent for you to tell you this and to ask the name and address of the owner of it, and also that of any friend of yours in Cavandone to whom I can write and ask him to bargain for the purchase of it. I will write to him this evening and tell him that the purchase money is ready any day."

"Uncle Nicholas, I have no words to express my surprise and joy. Oh, the delight it will be to Dorris to know that the home she loves is hers, with no fear of having to leave it." And happy tears filled the eyes of Dorothy.

"But as yet we are not sure it can be hers. Many changes may have taken place in the year you have been here; so I advise that you tell Dorris nothing of it until you are sure the house is hers."

Dorothy agreed with him in this opinion; she saw the wisdom of it.

"Now give me the address of the owner of the cottage," said Uncle Nicholas, taking a memorandum book from his pocket.

This was given and jotted down.

"Now the name of some friend in Cavandone who would go over the house and judge its value, and then see the owner in regard to the price."

"I think our former pastor would be the one. We have many friends in Cavandone and neighboring villages who would gladly help us in any way they could, and none would be more willing than our aged pastor." And she gave the address, which was noted, and shortly after arose to go.

"One thing more, Dorothy," said Uncle Nicholas; "when Melchior has finished what he has to do for you, tell him to come over to Ardez; I have a little business with him, and he shall be paid for his walk and loss of time."

"I will, uncle; and good-bye, and take my most grateful thanks for all your goodness to us."

"If it will be a pleasure to you to know it, I must say that you have trained your daughter well, Dorothy; she is a noble girl."

"Thank you, uncle! thank you!" said the mother, her refined face flushing at this sincere praise, and with this parting word she went home.

"He was very kind, Dorris, and I am glad I went," she said upon reaching the cottage; "it did me good after meeting with the coldness of my grandmother and aunts. They would have thought you perfect if they could have had their way in regard to Cousin Nicholas; uncle was good and kind notwithstanding you disappointed him."

By the middle of the afternoon the cottage was dismantled, with the exception of the few articles necessary for their use during the short time they would remain, after which they were to be the property of Melchior as a parting gift from them.

After seeing the articles consigned to the care of the transporters, Melchior walked over to Ardez, in compliance with the request of Uncle Nicholas, whose kind heart had become interested in another plan for the assistance of Dorothy and Dorris, and who consulted with Melchior as one in whom he could place every confidence.

CHAPTER XI.

BACK IN THE LOVED HOME.

It was the last evening of their stay in the cottage by the river, and Dorothy and her daughter sat by the window which looked toward Mont Pisoc. They were weary, but not depressed; instead, were happy in the prospect opened so unexpectedly before them, their only trial being that not one of their relatives had been near them since being told of their departure from Schuls.

It was a pleasant diversion from the thought of this to see Melchior coming down the mountain path, cross the bridge, and come up the path to their cottage, and Dorris ran to the door to admit him.

They were glad to see him; they felt that next to Uncle Nicholas he was their best friend in Switzerland, and it was with real regret that they realized that after the morrow they might never see him again.

"Have you pen and ink by you, Fräulein Dorris?" he said, turning to her. "There is a paper here which Herr Nicholas Durant wishes the mother to sign."

"I sign it?" cried Dorothy in surprise and some

anxiety. "What can it be that I am to sign? Read it, Dorris."

"Yes, you will read the paper to her, Dorris; then I am sure she will be willing to put her name to it," smiled Melchior, taking a legal-looking document from his pocket and putting it into her hand.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Dorris, flushing with delight as she glanced over the paper; "Uncle Nicholas has bought this house; all you have to do is to sign this paper, which releases your claim upon it."

"Dear, kind old uncle," commented Fräu Maurizius, gratefully; "and to give us such a good price for it! Indeed I will gladly put my name to it."

"And it is just a piece of our good fortune that I happened to put pen and ink in my little hand-satchel instead of a trunk," said Dorris, as she brought them to her mother, who signed the paper, Dorris and Melchior putting their names to the document as witnesses.

"Here is a part of the purchase money," said Melchior, taking it from his pocket, "and Herr Nicholas says he will send the balance to you after you have arrived at Cavandone."

"That will be far better," said Dorris; "we would be anxious if we had so much with us. Uncle Nicholas knows exactly what is best."

“God is so good to us,” said Dorothy, reverently. “He has smoothed the path step by step for our feet. Tell Uncle Nicholas that we are deeply grateful to him, and can leave this house knowing that it will be no care to you except to take out your few pieces of furniture and give the key to Uncle Nicholas.”

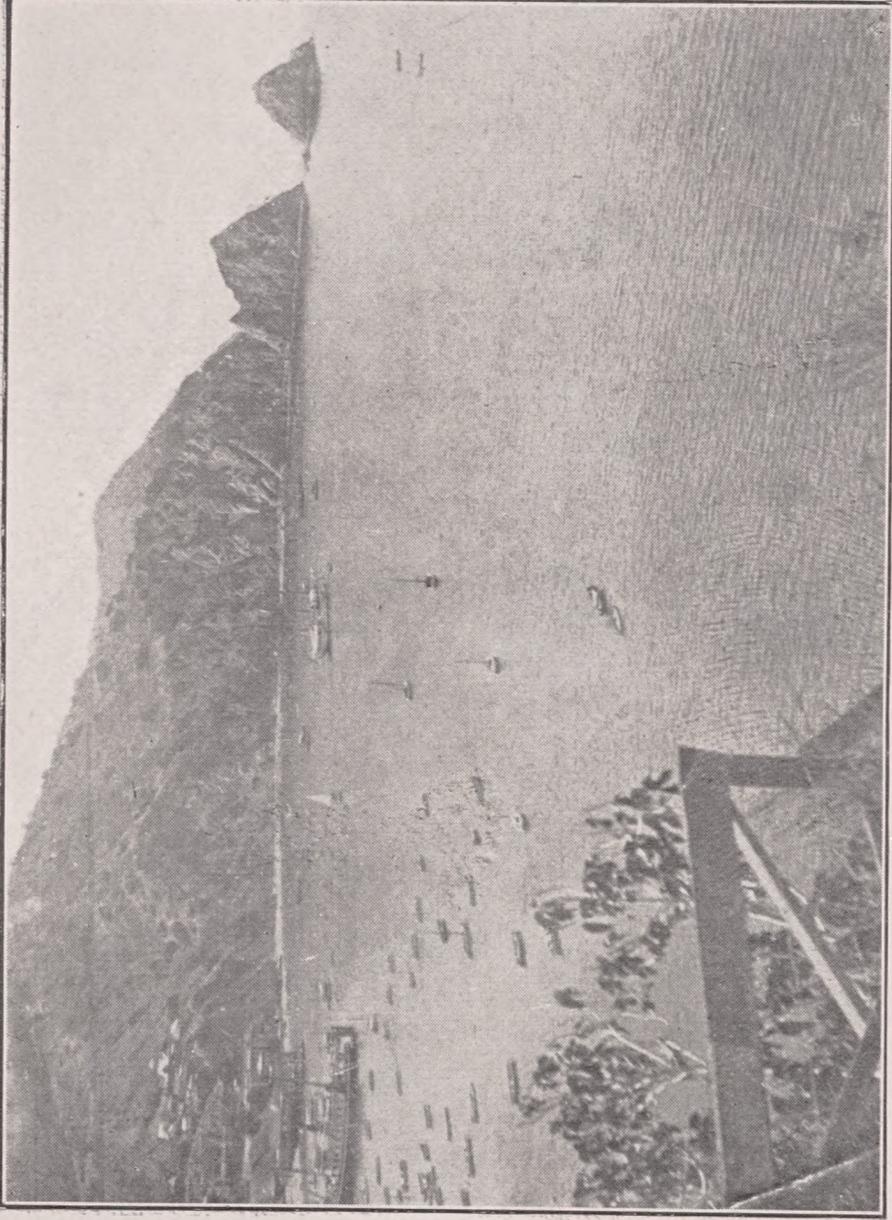
“But I will not have to move the furniture nor carry the key to Ardez,” said Melchior, cheerfully; “instead, will take possession. Herr Nicholas has let me have the cottage at very low rent, and my niece is to come to keep house for me. I will be nearer my work, and in every way will be better suited than I am now.”

This was a charming surprise to the ladies, and they congratulated the old man, who would be so comfortably fixed.

“It is a joy to us to know you will be here, Melchior,” said Dorothy; “to think of you being in the home that my father and mother loved, the home of my childhood, will be one of the pleasantest remembrances of Switzerland.”

“It is certainly one of the greatest favors to me,” replied the old man, and saying that he would come in the morning to see them off, he bade them good-night, and soon after mother and daughter retired to rest.

Happy as Dorothy had been a year before to come to her once loved home in Schuls, she was far



The Boat Speeding its Way Over the Lake.

happier to leave it and return to the happy scenes of her later life, and the journey to them was one of unalloyed pleasure.

It was near sunset of a cloudless day when she and Dorris stood on the fore part of the boat speeding its way over Lake Maggiore toward Zuna.

“Look, mamma!” cried Dorris; “see the lovely green slopes of Mont Rosso, like a velvet mantle, so smooth and soft. See the branches of the trees reflected in the clear water which is now sparkling with golden light; look at the old tower, and higher up the chapel, and the dear hamlets and villages dotted over it.”

“And Mont Ferro, and the stately Motterone,” added Dorothy.

“We have reached home,” said Dorris, as the boat touched the landing, “but Maja and the children are not here to meet us; I told her in my letter at what time to-day we would reach here.”

“She may not have received it; but it is no matter; we can leave our packages here and Giacomo will come for them when he comes from his work.”

“No, we need not wait a moment; we will go directly up to the house.”

They left the boat, Dorris drawing the carriage in which lay Willie, who had been enjoying a sound sleep on the boat, and was now bright and interested in all he saw. They were joyously glad that he had stood the journey so well and was

happy with them, seeming to improve every hour in spirits.

When they reached the chapel they halted to rest, and Dorris, with tears of joy and grief, sat down upon the bank where she had so often sat and read and sung to her father.

“Mamma,” said she, “the nearer I get to our dear home the more anxious I am, fearing that it is occupied. It has been so long since we heard from Giacomo, and I dread now that the reason he did not write was because he knew that we would be grieved to know that some one is living in our dear home. I do not know how I could bear it to pass it by to seek a place elsewhere.”

“I have thought of this every step I have taken, Dorris, but Providence has cared for us in every event of our lives; if he wills it that we are not to have the old home, we should and will trust to his judgment that it is best for us.”

Further conversation was prevented by hearing the sound of young voices, and in a moment they were surrounded by Maja and the children, who were clamoring with delight at seeing them.

“We were on our way to meet you,” said Maja; “the boat got in earlier than we expected.”

“Who would have thought that Benedetto and Marietta could have grown so much in one year?” said Dorris. “But Giacomo—where is he?” And she looked about her.

“Here, Fräulein,” said the boy, appearing from another and shorter path; and he held out his hand shyly.

“No, not Fräulein, but Dorris; I am the same Dorris to you all as when I left you.”

Marietta, having presented her with a wreath of wild flowers, had now turned her attention to Willie, who was viewing the proceedings with a mixture of pleasure and amazement. She broke off a long stick, which she placed in his hand as coachman’s whip, and a tin whistle in his other hand, and telling him to blow it, she started with his carriage up the slope, the others following, Giacomo carrying the small parcels which they had left upon the boat, he taking the landing way in his walk from Pallanza.

“But our house, Maja—is it occupied?” asked Dorothy as they walked along.

“Tell them, Giacomo,” said Maja, nodding to her grandson, but he reddened, and for a moment nothing was said.

“Then it is rented,” said Dorris; “at all events, it is lost to us.”

“There is no one in it; it is waiting for you,” he said, his black eyes bright with pleasure.

“Oh, how delightful!” cried Dorris in great relief. “Why did you keep the good news a moment from us, Giacomo? You surely know what a joy it

would be to us. Nothing you could tell us would give us more pleasure."

Dorothy, who was walking with Maja, was also happy over this report, yet felt that all was not quite clear. Giacomo was keeping something from them.

"He hesitates," said she; "perhaps the house is promised to some one."

"No; and you have come at a good time. As to Giacomo, I will tell you all about it. The day you left here the owner came; he is also the owner of the large gardens at Pallanza, as you know. A man came with him who wished to rent the house, with the view to buying it if it suited him. I had the key—you remember that you left it with me—and they asked me for it, as they wished to look over the terrace and garden which the owner had given into my care. When Giacomo heard that there was a prospect of the man taking it, he was almost beside himself with grief; he said that you would come back and could not have your old home. The owner laughed and said the house would have a long wait for a tenant if it waited for you; but Giacomo was so sure of it that he resolved to keep the cottage for you if in his power to do so. He walked to Pallanza and told the owner that he would work in his gardens from early morning until late at night, and allow his wages to lay in his employer's hands until enough

had accumulated to pay the rent of the cottage for a year.

"The owner looked at him in surprise, but promised that the house should stand unoccupied, because he saw that Giacomo was in earnest; besides, he needed a faithful, industrious boy in his gardens, and knew that Giacomo would be that boy. I think, too, that he decided in his own mind that the man who looked at it did not intend to buy it."

"And Giacomo went?" said Dorris, eagerly, as all halted in the interest of the story.

"Yes; the owner came to me to ask if I were willing to have him go; and I said I would gladly, for I knew that he would learn a good business with a good, kind employer; and if you did come back the house would be ready for you. When that matter had been settled and Giacomo had gone to work, Beppo came home from Genoa for the purpose of taking him back with him, but Giacomo had bargained to stay at the gardens, and Beppo took Benedetto in his stead."

"But he is here now," said Dorothy, turning to the tall boy, who had been helping Marietta with Willie's carriage.

"Yes, he is home on a visit, and we were all glad it happened to be now, that he might see you."

"They are all fine, healthy children; you may well be proud of them, Maja."

"I am not the only one who thinks well of them.

The employers of both of them say that they are faithful workers and reliable in every way. Giacomo gets good wages for a boy."

"But all the work he has done has brought him nothing for himself," commented Dorris, regretfully; "all went for the rent."

"Oh, no," replied Maja, eagerly; "that has been paid some time ago, and he has had some money to use for other things. He was commencing on another year of rent, although the owner would not promise to keep it the year if he had a good chance to sell it, as it is not good for a house to be vacant so long."

"You are sure that it is not sold?" said Dorothy, anxiously.

"No; the owner would have told Giacomo if it were sold. He was there this morning with our old pastor, and went over the house and terrace and garden; but I am sure the pastor does not need a house when he has one."

To Maja's surprise Dorothy did not seem the least depressed by this information; instead, she smiled brightly, and seemed in such excellent spirits that even Dorris could not understand the sudden change which all noticed.

They had by this time reached the cottage; the door was opened by Maja, and Dorothy and Dorris stood in delighted astonishment at what met their view. All their belongings were back in their old

places, looking so home-like and familiar that mother and daughter felt that the year since they left it was but a dream.

"This is why we were too late to meet you at the boat," said Maja, her kind face beaming with pleasure at seeing their surprise. "Your goods came just in time for us to have all in readiness for you, and no time over."

"How can we ever repay you and the children, Maja, for your goodness to us?" asked Dorothy, with tears in her eyes.

"You have done it long ago. What would these children have been had you not taken them in hand; where would I have been?" she added, smilingly.

"Let us go out on the terrace," said Dorris, eagerly; and Giacomo, drawing the carriage of Willie, followed her swift steps through the corridor and out the door at the back of the cottage, where another happy surprise awaited her, Giacomo having used the knowledge gained at the gardens in making the terrace more beautiful than ever. Roses, the richest, scented the evening air, and great clusters of purple grapes added to the fragrance.

"Oh!" said Willie, clasping his pale hands, "am I to be in this beautiful place? Is this my home, Aunt Dorris?"

"I hope so, Willie; I can only pray that God

will so bless us." Then, remembering the words of Melchior, she added, "If it be his will."

"Dorris," said her mother, "I must tell you something which I hope may come to pass. The day I went to bid Uncle Nicholas good-bye he told me that he wished to buy this place for you, and we have to thank Giacomo for keeping it vacant for us, and thus giving uncle a chance."

Dorris turned pale and red by turns in her delight at hearing this.

"Oh, mother, how could you keep such news from me?" she said.

"Because your Uncle Nicholas thought it wiser not to mention it to you until we found that it was unoccupied and still belonged to the employer of Giacomo and yet for sale, knowing it would add to the bitterness of your disappointment to know what might have been."

"But can he buy it, mamma? Is it still for sale?"

"Yes, Dorris; Maja tells me that the pastor, to whom your uncle told me he intended writing, was here to-day with the owner, and I have not the least doubt but the place is yours, for your uncle said he would give whatever price the pastor and owner agreed upon."

Maja and the children shared in the joy of mother and daughter, and had just congratulated them upon the happy prospect when they heard

the sound of voices, and the pastor and the proprietor of the gardens at Pallanza came through the corridor and out upon the terrace.

There were cordial greetings and welcomes home, and then the pastor put an official-looking paper in the hand of Dorris.

“Allow me to congratulate you, my child, upon becoming the owner of the sweet home; this is the deed to the cottage; it is now yours. Let us have a word of prayer; then I must go.”

They all knelt and the pastor asked that God’s blessing might rest upon the home; that they might have health and prosperity under its roof, never forgetting to give thanks to the loving Father above, who had so blessed them. Then he went, accompanied by his companion, and Dorris again thanked Giacomo for his thoughtful kindness in keeping the house for them.

“Now we must have a cup of tea,” said Dorothy; “and Maja and the children must stay and partake of it with us.”

“Yes, mamma; and let it be out here on the terrace, which Giacomo has kept in such beautiful condition for us.”

This was agreed to, and while Dorothy and Maja prepared the food, which Dorothy had brought with her from Schuls, Dorris and Marietta put the dishes upon the table, which Giacomo and Bene-

detto carried from the corridor, Willie looking upon all these doings in supreme content.

It was a serenely happy company that surrounded the board. The simple meal of rolls, butter, cheese, and wild honey was all that any of them could wish, yet they did not neglect the luscious grapes that hung within reach of their hands.

After Maja had helped Dorothy put all in order, she and the children left, wishing them every blessing upon their new home. Then Dorothy took Willie to his cot, where he was soon in a sweet, deep sleep, Dorris remaining alone upon the terrace. Twilight was brooding over the place; over the peak of Motterone the evening star was shining, and one by one others were appearing in the blue vault above. Dorris mused upon the changes which had come into her life since she last sat there. She had found a friend in Herr von Erstein, who had convinced her that she was of use in the world, thereby encouraging her to search for work to do, and faithfully perform that which came in her path. Through her aged Great-Uncle Nicholas she had become mistress of the loved home, with all its memories of her father—a precious gift.

Through her faithful old friend, Melchior, she had found a personal Saviour, who was always her stay and support. She saw him in every blade of

grass and flower by the wayside, in the blue sky overhead, in the rosy clouds of sunset, in the humblest pebble at her feet. Her faith and trust in him lightened every labor and brightened every pleasure. She had the blessed assurance that she was accepted of him, and earth could offer no joy like that; no grief would be more than she could bear when she had her Saviour to rely upon for comfort.

CHAPTER XII.

GOOD COMPANY FOR WILLIE.

Fräü Maurizius and Dorris were cordially welcomed home by their many friends, the void in church and community was again filled, and the winter passed quickly and happily. They were efficient helpers in all good works, and dropped naturally into the life and activities about them.

One bright morning in early spring Dorris stood upon the terrace, where Giacomo was pruning vines and bushes with a practiced hand.

The boy's hope had been realized; Dorris had put garden and terrace in his care, and he arose an hour earlier than he might stop on his way to Pallanza each morning and sometimes an hour in the evening to keep all in order.

He was one of the reliable and valuable assistants at the gardens, and received fair wages for his work.

Willie in his carriage was near by, looking with delight upon a bouquet which Dorris had placed in his hands.

It was a great satisfaction to all to see the great improvement in the boy since coming to Italy. He would always be lame, but his cheeks now had a

tinge of rose, his eyes had lost their languid expression, and he was gaining flesh.

Giacomo's hour was nearly up when a neighbor, who had been to Cavandone, halted to leave a letter for Dorris, given her by the postmaster.

It was post-marked Berlin, but forwarded from Schuls, and her surprise was great upon opening it to find a letter from Herr von Ernstein enclosing a check for quite a sum, which he begged her to accept and use in any way she wished in memory of Amälie.

Dorris thanked God for the gift, for she hoped it would be the means of gratifying a long cherished wish, none other than to buy the cottage where Maja lived and the large lot which she and Marie had cultivated for many seasons and present them as a free gift to Maja.

Dorothy knew of this wish and rejoiced with her that it could now be attained, providing the owner would sell it.

"I will stop and tell him you wish to see him if you give me leave," said Giacomo, his brilliant black eyes beaming with joy.

"Do, Giacomo, leave your work and go now, that you may not be late at the gardens."

The boy hurried away, and Dorothy and her daughter talked over his new surprise; then Dorris wrote a hearty letter of thanks to Herr von Ernstein for his thoughtful kindness.

They had thought that Giacomo had scarcely time to reach Pallanza when they saw a man coming up the mountain path and stop at their door. It was the owner of the house and lot and was eager to sell, as he needed money at the time.

The bargain was soon made; he then and there wrote an agreement, and the little property was Maja's, the deed to be made out in her name.

Toward evening, when Giacomo returned from Pallanza, Dorothy, Dorris and Willie were in readiness to accompany him to the cottage of Maja.

"She will never know how to thank you," said Giacomo; "she has always longed for the lot, and feared some one would offer a higher rent for the cottage and get it."

Marietta was the first to see them coming and ran to meet them and help with Willie's carriage, and Maja came to the end of the grape arbor and welcomed them eagerly.

"Maja," said Dorris as they took seats on the benches in the arbor, "I came to tell you that I have had some money given me in memory of Fräulien von Ernstein, of whom you often heard me speak, and who gave me papa's painting of 'The Shore of the North Sea.' Mamma and I agree that the best use we can make of it is to buy that lot for you which you and Marie kept in such beautiful condition and raised such fine grapes and other fruits and vegetables. I have

bought it and this cottage and they are yours. Here are the papers which give you possession," and she put them in her hand.

Maja stood for a while speechless with surprise and joy, then took the hand of Dorris and kissed it many times.

"My own, my very own!" she said with tears; "no anxiety to raise the rent, whether we have good crops or not, as was once the case. It is no dream from which I will awake, but the field is mine for all time."

"Yes, yours, Maja. You can begin work in it this very evening if you choose. I will see that the deed shall be in your name and given into your own hands."

"Where I had my rows of beautiful onions and other vegetables there are now rank weeds," said Maja. "Oh, the joy it will be to Giacomo and me to see it cleared and planted!"

"We must go now, Maja," said Dorris, "and I wish you every success with your new possessions."

"Thank you a thousand times for them. Oh, the delight I will take in working in the sweet-smelling earth, in the dear field where Marie and I worked so many happy days! Oh, Dorris, you have been our good angel, and may God's blessing always rest upon you."

When mother and daughter reached home they

found a middle-aged woman sitting upon the bench under the chestnut tree near the door, who arose and introduced herself as Fräulein Werner. Two handsome, bright-eyed little boys were playing near and came and stood by the carriage of Willie, to his great surprise and delight.

“Are you the Aunt Dorris that papa said would take care of us and teach us Italian?” asked the eldest boy, looking up at her.

“Yes, I am Dorris Maurizius, and would like you to tell me your name.”

“It is Otto Strahl, and this is my brother Gustav.”

Dorris gazed upon them in pleased surprise and Fräulein Werner hastened to explain, Willie and the two visitors listening with intense interest.

“Dr. Strahl is on the eve of taking a journey to India,” she said, “and took his two boys to Schuls, not knowing you had left there. He hoped to see you and ask you to take care of them, as the relative who has had charge of them could not do so any longer. While in Schuls he heard that a lady at the Sanitarium had asked you to take charge of her crippled son, who must go to a warmer climate. You had accepted the charge and brought him to your old home on Mont Rosso. He said you would be doing him a great kindness to receive his boys under your and your mother’s care, for which you will be liberally paid.”

"I am sure we can take them, mamma," said Dorris, turning to her. "They will be happy here, and will be good company for Willie."

"Certainly we will take them, dear, if you think best."

"Then we are to stay," cried Otto, joyously, "and papa said we could call you Aunt Dorris if you will let us."

"Certainly you may, and you will be dear, good little boys, I am sure."

"She is my Aunt Dorris," cried Willie, excitedly; "she shall not be your Aunt Dorris; she loved me first."

"Yes, Willie," said Dorris, caressing him, "but these poor little boys have no mother and their father has gone far, far away from them, so you must help me keep them from being lonely."

Willie could not promise; but at that moment Dorothy unlocked the door of the cottage. His carriage was taken through the corridor to the terrace, all following, and peace was restored to his troubled heart by being again in his loved corner amid the flowers he loved.

Supper was taken upon the terrace, and after an hour there, enjoying the lovely sunset, Dorris took the three boys to their rooms, heard them say their prayers, kissed them all good-night, and returned to the terrace, where Fräü Dorothy and

their guest for the night were enjoying the soft moonlight.

They conversed for some time, then Fräu Maurizius conducted their guest to her room, and Dorris remained alone for some time, her thoughts upon the incidents of her life under her Heavenly Father's guiding hand; then she too retired to rest, singing softly:

“Take my hand, oh Father dear,
Let me know thee ever near.”

THE END.

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